The material politics of houses at Çatalhöyük, 7000–6300 BCE

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Cover image: Reconstruction drawing of an image painted on the front face of a burial platform, Building 49, Çatalhöyük. Drawn by Kathryn Killackey; printed in Eddisford (2013, fig.14.37) Used with permission of the Çatalhöyük Research Project.

Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

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Summary

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Archaeologists often treat past houses and households as social units—as places of stability within larger political dynamics. Houses are rendered as conservative objects, not places of profound change. This thesis adopts a material political approach to houses, considering the way they were assembled through time as a working-out of social alternatives. By approaching prehistoric houses, not as units but as processes of space-making extending through time, it shows the great extent to which past societies' politics were navigated and transformed through intimate communities and intimate places. Using fine analysis of the internal stratigraphy of houses, I show how much more variable and consequential domestic communities were at a turning point in human history (the beginning of the Neolithic expansion) where many conventional 'prime movers' of more recent histories (nations, armies, corporations, elites of various sorts) simply did not exist to drive change. In so doing, The material politics of houses at Çatalhöyük opens avenues for perceiving the full political weight of small houses and everyday relationships elsewhere and at other times—even in the present.

The focus of this thesis is space-making in domestic contexts at the 7th millennium site of Çatalhöyük in central Turkey. Çatalhöyük spanned two worlds, both geographically and chronologically: one where settled farming life developed, piecemeal and dispersedly, over many millennia following the last glacial maximum within the confines of the Middle East, and one where settled farming life seemed inexorably spread across the world map in a matter of 2,000 years. It thus represents a window into a turning point in the social dynamics of vital technologies and human lifeways writ large. The site itself, pristinely preserved and meticulously excavated, is the result of a unique way of living that packed small mudbrick houses, wall-against-wall with very few gaps, onto an exceptionally dense mound of old dismantled architecture. No 'temples', 'palaces' or 'public buildings' have been discovered to date, and instead all aspects of social life—from grain processing and cooking to art and human burial—were integrated into houses at Çatalhöyük. The thesis asks, what can the houses at Çatalhöyük tell us about the material politics that articulated lives, houses, and practices in the 7th millennium?

Houses' interiors at Çatalhöyük were plastered hundreds of times over the course of their use-lives. This creates unparalleled stratigraphy for investigating change through time inside of them. The backbone of the research presented herein is the creation of high-resolution stratigraphic timelines of changes in 11 Çatalhöyük houses' interiors, each capturing hundreds of space-making moments that transformed the house's interior over several decades. These are supplemented by broader investigations of houses' biographies and contextual analyses of key moments (e.g. construction, burial) in the broader site. From this basis, the thesis investigates four questions:

- How did people at Çatalhöyük make and reshape domestic space as a part of the work of making communities and meeting life needs?
- How did their particular way of shaping material space fit into broader political dynamics in the Neolithic town?
- What changed in the way communities formed and intersected through houses over the course of the 7th millennium?
- How did politics 'spill out' of houses at Çatalhöyük and feed larger-scale changes in the site, region, and in the dynamics of the Neolithic phenomenon more broadly?

I establish that each house at Çatalhöyük was a political multiple object—engaged in the work and knowledge of a variety of communities that were more or less stable, rather than relating to a singular stable household with clear-cut social qualities. From this understanding, I illuminate social dynamics that worked through and cross-cut houses in one 66th century neighbourhood. Although every house seems self-sufficient in time-compressed overview, a close stratigraphic reading reveals a surprising frequency of moments where houses were unequipped for vital tasks like cooking, storage or burial of the dead, suggesting that it was not autonomy but rather creative and dynamic dependency that situated houses in lives, and lives in houses. I also trace a tension between ways of politicizing space through knowledge of its depths (the generations of built-up walls, bodies, deposits and other salient details invisibly sealed below people's feet) and knowledge of its surfaces (displays of plaster and paint, sculpture and persistent boundaries). Finally, the thesis turns to a diachronic examination of community through time at Çatalhöyük, considering the waxing and waning of different political dimensions through the biographies of earlier and later 7th millennium houses. In particular, I show how a political dynamic of friction—where

difference was accommodated and elaborated without dividing people or spaces into discrete, bounded units—gave way to one of integrity, where houses and communities were fitted to a more unitary 'mould' (something like a household) but also became less flexible and more brittle in the process. I relate this to architecture in other later 7th millennium sites in Turkey, speculatively relating the dynamics of communities in houses and landscapes to the transformed spatial dynamics of the Neolithic at regional scales in this period.

This thesis shows how dramatic transformations of human lifeways have been sustained in intimate spaces, through the work of bodies, ovens, plasters and gatherings. This bottom-up, materialist approach to politics and history, focused on the details of communities and knowledge at one site, thus resonates with central concerns in archaeology across larger scales.

Acknowledgements

To think any thought between the covers here I needed experiences, conversations, lessons, and a great deal of help getting along in the world. Just as I write that no house is brought to life by a single animating force, many people came together to propel this thesis (and me) through the years. I can only name a few here; but I am deeply grateful to all of the communities of friends and colleagues who have held me up through every high and low point, and taught me, in many senses of that word, along the way.

First, I owe thanks to institutions that backed me financially and pastorally. The Cambridge Commonwealth, European and International Trust provided my primary funding, and Trinity Hall, Cambridge, provided my pastoral port of call. Darwin College, where I completed my Master's, remains a true home in this city, with special mention to its gardens, parlour, and alas its bar (and to everyone who has kept me company in these places). The Çatalhöyük Research Project kindly provided permission to reproduce images from the excavations. Parts of Chapters 2, 3, and 5 have been adapted and published as 'Dynamic Houses and Communities at Çatalhöyük: A Building Biography Approach to Prehistoric Social Structure' in the *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* (2020), while further text and figures from Chapters 5 and 6 are under review as part of the latest Çatalhöyük Research Project reports. The guidance of editors and peer reviewers in both cases helped to sharpen the thought behind this thesis and improved the argument as a whole, for which I am deeply grateful.

Of the individuals who have shaped this thesis, first mention goes to John Robb. I think there is a rather narrow stock model for what an Archaeological Idea looks like, and in what terms Archaeological Ideas can be discussed; and often these are cloistered off from our own experiences of the world and our way of talking about them. Certainly this describes many of my Archaeological Ideas when I took up this research. John above all has challenged me to think outside that box, to ask more substantial questions and answer them with fewer buzzwords and frills (and with more whiteboard diagrams). Along the way, he showed a great deal of patience as I learned the craft of organizing a large project—lessons generally learned the hard way on the third or tenth try. I am a much better scholar, teacher, and colleague for all of this.

Other faculty in the department in Cambridge have made this a stimulating and welcoming place to live. In various ways, Marie-Louise Stig Sørensen, Augusta McMahon, Elizabeth DeMarrais, and Sheila Kohring in particular took time to encourage, challenge, and support me, and made me feel like a member of a research community rather than a student hanger-on. Too many staff, postdocs and students in the department have done the same for me to name; but in particular, working in the Material Culture Lab has given me a hub of conversation, inspiration, and about a dozen role models for the kind of archaeologist, teacher and friend I hope to be.

I owe a great deal to the people who first taught me to be an archaeologist at the University of Evansville. This especially includes Jennie Ebeling and Jim Berry, who encouraged me to look closely at lives and places that seem small at a glance, but never really are. While at Evansville and since, the faculty there have been mentors, sources of advice and encouragement, and friends. Many undergraduates are lucky to have one faculty member champion them through their studies and the years that follow; I have half a dozen, and that speaks volumes about the people and the community at that university. Deep thanks to all of you.

Since I became interested in Çatalhöyük as an undergraduate I have received a warm welcome from the Çatalhöyük Research Project, and been lucky enough to dig there for two seasons. Much of this can be attributed to Ian Hodder, who has been a mentor through these years and whose commitment to an archaeology open to multiple voices, perspectives and approaches (even those of in-over-their-heads Master's students) shows in so much that the project has done. Justine Issavi, Jovana Tripković, Cristina Belmonte, Ahmed Kzzo, Stella Macheridis and many others went out of their way to make me welcome, show me the ropes and teach me how to *venga*. James Taylor, Burcu Tung and Camilla Mazzucato also shared vital resources for this project—Harris matrices and building-level data—without which the research here would not have been possible.

This thesis was completed, submitted, read and examined remotely and under lockdown amid the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. My examiners, Liz DeMarrais and Doug Baird, have been extremely kind to be flexible and patient with the circumstances, and insightful and challenging in their reading of the text. In this final form it stands significantly improved, with thanks to their constructive critique and further prompts for thought. Sincere thanks to you both.

Several people took time to read and comment on draft material, and more have given invaluable feedback on presentations, articles, lunch-table rants and a master's thesis that have spun off from my research. I especially owe thanks to Margaret Comer, Joanna

Lawrence, Jess Thompson, Laurence Ferland, Sian Mui, Izzy Wisher, Mark Haughton and David Kay for this. In my second year I was incredibly lucky to have a world-class archaeologist of houses land in the desk next to me on a two-year research visit. In a nutshell, Marianne Hem Eriksen has been my most constructive critic, wisest academic-practice guru, and a vortex of enlightening conversation since. For everything—thank you.

The point of this thesis is that seemingly-small places and the people in them do more to shape our world than they are ever really credited for. Since I was small this was visible all around me; my father, Joe, my sister, Abby, my grandmother Mary and great-aunt Lois, and the messy (and distinctly matriarchal) midwestern family around us were living proof, each in their way. I learned, above all, from my mother, Diana Kay, and from Judy Middeler, who from small corners of Ohio have shaped thousands of futures without fanfare. I dedicate this work to them.

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Chapter 1

Houses as politics; houses as history

1.1 Introduction

I wrote the bulk of this thesis in a small rented bedroom that I shared with a family of squirrels who lived in the ceiling. Each morning around dawn they woke and squabbled above my head before leaving through a series of holes in the roof at the gutter line. The crawlspace they nested in was blocked off from human access by a heavy bargeboard, and lacked a floor that could bear human weight: unfortunate design choices that precluded trapping the animals. The landlord insisted that any repairs billed to him be arranged through his handyman, a physically disabled man with seemingly encyclopaedic knowledge of Cambridge's least reliable subcontractors. I lived with the squirrels for nine months. In the corner of the room the walls were stained with bleached-dead mould. A previous tenant must have left the window there open in a rainstorm.

There was a great deal of politics going on in that house at 6 Manhattan Drive. Some of it was the kind of thing we recognize intuitively as politics, things we might read about in a newspaper, hear in a politician's stump speech or learn from a history textbook. As tenants, we were constrained by UK law that did not protect us from retaliatory eviction if we filed a formal complaint against the landlord. The precarious economy of UK academia ruled out paying out of pocket for roofing services, as we lived on studentships near or below the poverty line. It is easy to see the spectre of certain deceased prime ministers, whose policies allowed middle-class people of my landlord's generation to buy rental properties cheaply and to profitably neglect them. Certainly, the house reinforced the leanings of three voters, as similar experiences have shaped so many of our peers'.

But is this what made the house political? Because laws laid down by parliament were involved? Because it nudged elections ever so slightly in one direction or another? No. I think politics is less categorically about places like Westminster and the elections that send people there (however much those people would like us to think that only they can shape our world). It's more ubiquitous than that. 6 Manhattan Drive was political because through it, very many actors shaped what the future might be. The landlord, the handyman, the squirrels, my housemates and I, the former tenants, even the mould—we impacted one another's lives through our actions and inactions, because we impacted a house we were all

vitally involved in. The squirrels would have been trapped and killed if not for design choices made decades earlier; fewer contractors would have been paid for their labour if any one had fixed the roof thoroughly; perhaps more would have happened if I had kicked up more of a fuss. I would certainly share less camaraderie with my housemates without the mutual experience. For all of us, the things that we spent our time doing in those months, the things we hoped to accomplish day-to-day and the specific conditions that we had to take account of in doing so were shaped by our ties to and through that house. We formed bonds, antagonisms, outlooks and understandings in the process. That's politics, too. The lives, laws, and economies that were involved in 6 Manhattan Drive extended far beyond it, but in that small attached house they intertwined in very concrete ways.

The politics of that house was material, as much as verbal or legal. True, money was involved, as was the law, and many emails and conversations. But equally, the bargeboards and unfloored base of the crawlspace greatly changed our lives in 2019, even though we will never know the names of the architects or builders responsible for them. Small mistakes of past tenants stained the place, adding to the atmosphere of disrepair. Thin plywood patches—easily manipulated with small paws and sharp teeth—made all the difference for the squirrels, who found it easier to reopen their old holes than to relocate to another home. And today's highly specialized labour market, where some of us learn skills as archaeologists while gaining virtually no knowledge of how to maintain our own roof, created material dependencies between people. We needed more than willpower to evict the squirrels; we needed other people with other skills to make that a reality. So the politics of shaping others' lives was carried out in plasters and plywood, knowledge and bodily skill, time and movement, as much as through words and bank cheques. It all became sedimented in the form of the house: change a few factors, eight months or 80 years ago, and the house might look somewhat different today.

I want to make the case in this thesis that politics is less exclusively a question of institutions and concepts than our histories tend to portray it. Little places like 6 Manhattan Drive are vital centres where our lives shape others' futures and vice versa. And houses take the forms they do over time, with their stains, holes, patches and all, as a part of this politics. By the end of this volume I will argue that one of the most dramatic historical transitions in the known past—the transformation of settled farming life from a regional idiosyncrasy of the Middle East to a globe-spanning phenomenon—grew partly out of material politics in houses, and the way these opened up specific kinds of futures for people living in the 7th millennium BCE. By showing how houses shaped history (or, more provocatively: *were* history), I will refocus politics on the material process of community, and the multiplicity of communities that can form through even a modest mudbrick house.

In the end, what I hope you take away from this text is a sense of possibility. In the next 300-odd pages we will delve into the particulars of the 7th millennium BCE in central Turkey, the peculiar considerations of life in mudbrick architecture, the challenges of archaeological knowledge of the past and some finer philosophical points about communities and the material world. The details will matter. It is worth thinking about the 7th millennium in its own right, both because it is a part of our own history as settled people and because it is a rich example of how the world can significantly change without the involvement of states, armies, corporations or any of the other self-styled prime movers of more recent histories. But along the way I will develop a set of concepts and perspectives that cast intimate spaces more generally at the centre of politics, and shed light on the ways rather humble life gives shape to the world in meaningful ways. When we start to see houses in the past, not just as reflections of a place and time but as actively involved in changing things, what other new histories might we see? And what opportunities might we find in our own houses and communities? We live in alienating times, and it is easy to feel powerless and small. But there are other politics in our lives than the ones in the news, and other futures possible besides our major parties' manifestos. In a modest way, I hope that this excursion to nine millennia past will also contain the germ of questions that can illuminate other places and times, including our own.

1.2 Material politics and houses' biographies: research aims

The coming chapters explore four questions about houses at the 7th millennium BCE site of Çatalhöyük, in central Turkey.

- How did people at Çatalhöyük make and reshape domestic space as a part of the work of making communities and meeting life needs?
- How did their particular way of shaping material space fit into broader political dynamics in the Neolithic town?
- What changed in the way communities formed and intersected through houses over the course of the 7th millennium?
- How did politics 'spill out' of houses at Çatalhöyük and feed larger-scale changes in the site, region, and in the dynamics of the Neolithic phenomenon more broadly?

These questions frame politics as the intersection of communities in an active material

medium—the same way I have thought about politics in my own house above. This is a somewhat different perspective than the one archaeologists usually have in mind when we write about politics, and requires some hard thought about what we mean when we speak of communities and social structure. They also invite a different way of working with archaeological houses. Too often, archaeologists sum up houses in a top-down plan, a set of statistics, a database entry: a house is presented as a fixed entity. The material political view here invites us to look at the process of *space-making*: how architecture emerges over time through its involvement in diverse communities, all oriented not toward stability but change (Tringham 1995; Bailey and McFadyen 2010).

In order to investigate houses as a political process, I will develop a new way of working with buildings' *biographies*. Houses at Çatalhöyük present a wonderful opportunity for the practice of archaeological stratigraphy. Composed over decades out of many hundreds of clay layers, they preserve more clearly than almost any other architectural style the sequence of creative actions that shaped structures and involved them in different aspects of 7th millennium life. By adapting methods developed at the site for synthesizing stratigraphic information and developing an overall picture of space's dynamics (Taylor et al. 2015, Taylor 2016b), I will explore the space-making activities that shaped 12 Çatalhöyük houses in great detail. The high-resolution *relative timelines* of houses' lives that result show the way material was layered onto space over time, constituting different assemblages of features. By looking at these changing assemblages and the social qualities that emerged from their combinations, and by comparing the biographies of several houses, we gain a clearer sense of the way communities changed (as all communities do) and how they intersected and shaped one another through time. Together with coarser exploration of the lives of other houses, these will show the way substantial social changes over 700 years were refracted through, and driven within, intimate spaces and practices.

1.3 From the house to the horizon at Çatalhöyük: Neolithic questions

Çatalhöyük is a 14-metre-tall mound of toppled architecture and piled-up midden in central Turkey, southeast of the modern metropolis of Konya (Mellaart 1967; Hodder 1996, 2000, 2005, 2013, in preparation). The very top of the mound is cut by foundations and burials from classical antiquity through postmedieval times. The remainder was made in the Neolithic, between about 7100 and 5950 BCE (Bayliss et al. 2015; Marciniak et al. 2015; Orton et al. 2018). During much of this time, the site was a large settlement of substantial mudbrick buildings, packed wall-against-wall on all sides with few open spaces between. People moved around the site across the rooftops and descended into buildings by ladders

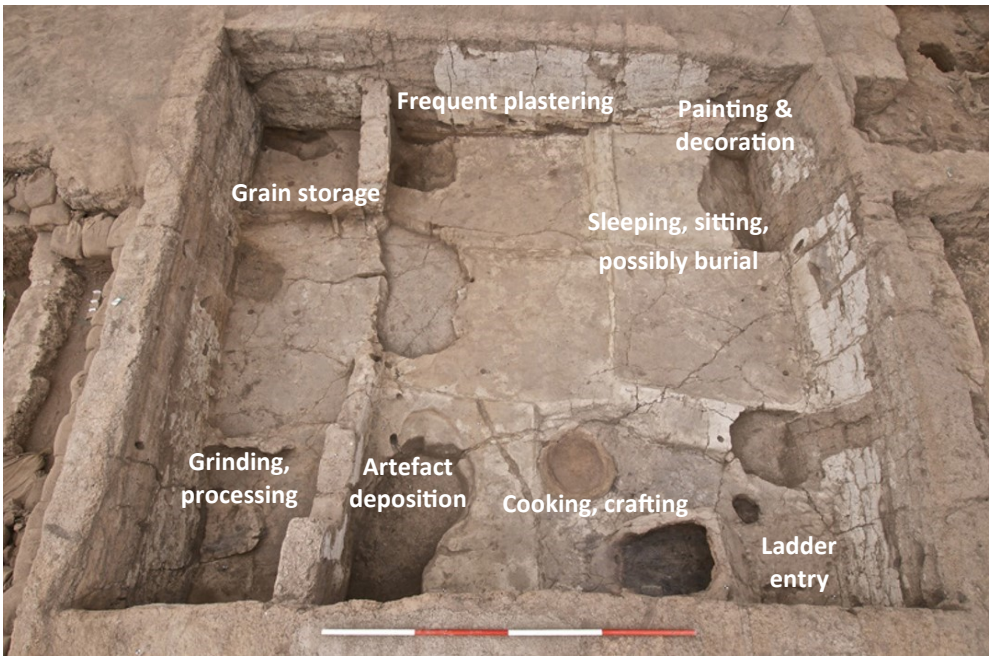

Figure 1.1. Building 119, a mid-7th millennium house at Çatalhöyük, annotating activities evident inside of it. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

from the roof. To date, nothing resembling 'public' architecture has been located at Çatalhöyük: every Neolithic building excavated evidently served as a residence. Instead of separating ritual, artistic production, funerary practice and the like into discrete spaces, these activities were integrated into domestic space for much of the site's history (Figure 1.1).

If Çatalhöyük houses were an all-singing, all-dancing show, the score changed key several times over the course of the performance. Through the early 7th millennium, the town grew and densified rapidly as new buildings were added along the tell's edge and slotted into open spaces within the settlement. The settlement plan was conserved through the practice of superimposed construction: buildings were periodically torn down and rebuilt, using the wall -stubs of the older structure as foundations for the new one. Not only did superimposed buildings share the same outline, but paintings, burials, even small details of their furnishing tended to 'cite' earlier structures, demonstrating a remarkable commitment to the history of built places (Hodder and Pels 2010; see §2.4.3). At the tell's peak, in or around the 66th century, it may have housed upward of 5,000 individuals (Cessford 2005c) and witnessed a remarkable flourish of painting, craft production, and dramatic rituals like feasts and intentional house burnings (see §2.4.3). But with this flourish came change: many 66th century houses were not rebuilt, and the dense tell began to disperse as open spaces spread and new structures shifted more freely around (i.e. with less attention to history). New architectural practices, different artistic and ritual performances, and a changing economy characterized the smaller town of the late 7th millennium. Ultimately in the 60th century the

mound was abandoned even as a new settlement on the opposite side of the Çarşamba River grew (Marciniak et al. 2015; Orton et al. 2018).

Çatalhöyük's sequence resonates with dramatic turns in Neolithic history more broadly. In the 71st century, when people first built houses at Çatalhöyük, settled farming life had become the norm across the Middle East over 1,500 years. This has become increasingly clear as modern surveys and excavations have demonstrated that incipient Neolithic practice developed diffusely throughout a 'core zone' (including the Fertile Crescent, central and eastern Anatolia, Cyprus, and now-desertified areas of Jordan and the Sinai) from the 9th millennium onward (e.g. Özdoğan 1997; Vigne et al. 2011). However, despite contact between settled people and Mesolithic populations (Çilingiroğlu 2016; Horejs 2019; Horejs et al. 2015; Reingruber 2011) and engagement in isolated 'Neolithic' practices in a few parts of western Turkey and the Aegean (Baird 2019), there is little evidence for integrated farming lifeways spreading *beyond* the core zone to southeast Europe, Egypt, or central Asia during this time (Brami 2017; 2019; Düring 2011; 2013; Rosenstock 2019; but see Baird 2019). Agriculture was effectively a regional peculiarity of the Middle East, and demonstrated few of its later proclivities to spread across whole continents. For the first half of its occupation, Çatalhöyük sat near the northwesternmost extent of the settled world. A few sites in western Turkey may date to the late 8th millennium, attesting to broader low-level mobility around the time of Çatalhöyük's foundation. Only in the middle of the 7th millennium—just around the height of Çatalhöyük's occupation—do farming settlements begin to appear en masse outside of the regions where the Neolithic first emerged over the prior two millennia (Brami 2015; 2017; Horejs 2019; Düring 2013), the first wave of a process that would ultimately transform Eurasia into a continent of farmers.

Something changed in the politics of settlement and the significance of space, both at Çatalhöyük and beyond, in the 7th millennium. We have only begun to grasp this transition. Looking at how communities formed and transformed spaces during this time gives powerful insight into the politics that shaped the Neolithic into the historical turning point that it was. The richly-stratified houses at Çatalhöyük provide an unmatched opportunity to follow this politics as it penetrated through intimate spaces and lives—and as these lives spilled out into larger landscapes and grander histories.

1.4 Prehistoric houses as material politics

My own house is in some ways a poor example of the political perspective I will develop in this thesis—not because it was not political in all the ways I have laid out, but because of

how I know about it. From an insider's perspective it is easy to sense out the way squirrels, tenants, moulds, and maintenance workers impact one another through a house. But an insider's perspective on prehistoric houses is no longer possible: any squirrels or tenants left in them have long since ceased to shape one another's lives. To study politics in prehistoric houses we need perspectives that start from the material remains. Could prehistory ever come close to matching the richness of an ethnographic study—or even go further?

The interpretive pathways archaeologists use to get from excavated houses to past communities are politically laden in themselves (e.g. Hodder 2000; Wiley 1991). The ways we excavate, document those excavations and analyse data open up or close off insight into political dynamics in the past. Equally, we choose to work with houses in the ways that we do precisely because of how we understand their impact on people in the past. Because of this, even objectively true statements ('this house contained 1.5kg of obsidian when excavated') come with political assumptions. This is not a problem; it simply means that, before we start to ask what prehistoric houses were like, we need to consider how they may have mattered.

The problem is that, in many archaeological framings, houses themselves have at best a secondary role in the study of politics. As I will discuss further in Chapters 3 and 4, the idea of politics in archaeology has never quite separated from the model of communities as concepts or institutions. Whether this means tracing the emergence of 'social complexity', following 'culture groups' across a map or assessing the relationships among heterarchically -organized power-centres within a political economy, it is all too common for the political actors of the past to float atop the material world, rather than subsisting down in it. Houses, in particular, have been tied to the institution of the household: the remains of excavated houses are often used to *stand in* for small groups of people (Kay 2020; Tringham 1991; Weismantel 2014). We can see this, for example, in studies that compare values like the sum of food stores or exotic goods in different structures as if they are straightforwardly comparing the prosperity or roles of groups of people. The messy and dynamic ways that spaces get bound up with lives, cross-cutting and challenging any single kind of relationship or community, can all too easily be abstracted out into a clean one-to-one, community-to-building relationship (Eriksen 2019; Weismantel 2014).

The second problem with the institutional model of politics is that its actors too often become timeless, almost Platonic. We know, from our own lives and ethnographic accounts of very different lives, that communities are defined as much by the way they change as by the things they lay claim to as their own. It's all in the way lives give birth to other lives, people move in, move out, and die, bond or fall out of touch, inherit things and give things

away. Who of us can claim to be part of a household that existed 80 years ago, in any practical sense? What politician proposes to keep the state working exactly as it does now, rather than taking it to some new future or back to some pure past? And yet, particularly when houses are cast as stand-ins for households, they can be understood to be essentially stable for as long as the house that represents them archaeologically stood. The way different dynamics penetrate into, stitch together and break apart relationships (and houses, too) can so easily fade out of sight.

In this thesis I lay out a different way of thinking about politics, which activates excavated houses in a different way. In my mind the concepts of politics, community, and change are inseparable. They are all fundamentally about the way lives (human or otherwise) get tangled together and shape one another's horizons. Law and Mol (2008,133) call this perspective *material politics*: 'a material ordering of the world in a way that contrasts . . . with other and equally possible alternative modes of ordering.' Material politics is precisely about the way material intervenes in the directions that lives and communities can take, the way plywood and mould, mudbrick and ochre produce forks in the road, changed horizons, or chart new courses one way or another for a range of people whose lives are tied up with them. And, reciprocally, the way communities *do* change affects the way the material world that is a part of them takes form.

Of course the problem with tangled things is that they are hard to think straight. As we encounter Çatalhöyük houses in coming chapters, I want to follow three strands of thought into the fray:

> ***Houses do not reflect communities; they participate in many.*** In this century, social theory in archaeology and beyond has called our attention to the constitutive roles of things, animals, atmospheres, and other nonhumans in communities (Bennett 2010; Boivin 2008; Hinchliffe and Whatmore 2006; Ingold 2000; Lucas 2012). It is not just that human communities use things (sustenance, shelter, prestige goods, border walls) to live and position themselves socially; it is that things actively participate in communities as members in them (Harris 2013). A household takes the shape that it does in part because of the way roofs decay, water stains walls, squirrels nest and plaster caves under the weight of a human body. If we want to consider the way communities take form, we do well to follow the action of all their members, not just members with faces (and without tails). We are thus invited to collapse the ontological distinction between human communities and the material interactions that make them up (or *assemble* them) (Boivin 2008; Fowler 2013; Holbraad and Pedersen 2017).

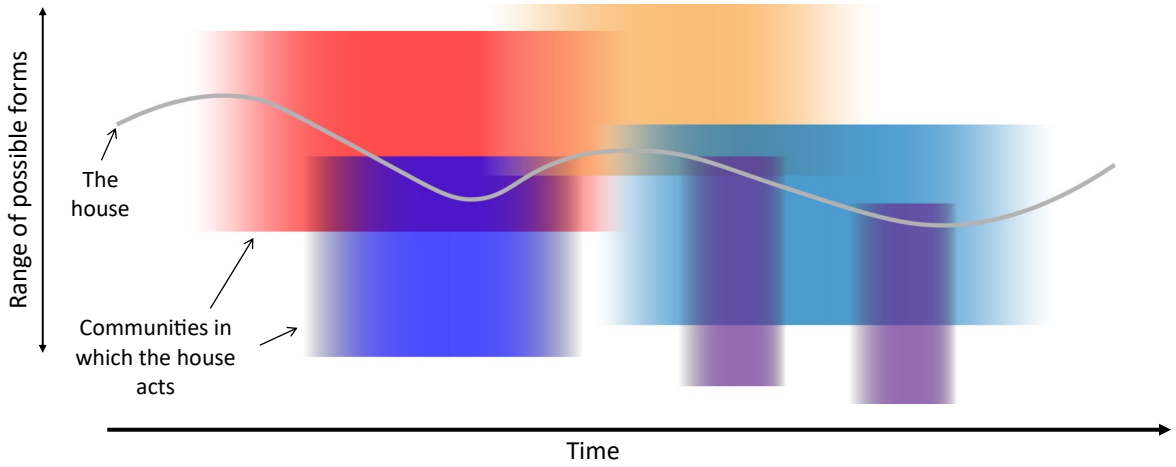

Figure 1.2. Representation of a house taking form as it participates in multiple communities through time, and they 'pull' it in turn.

When we reconsider communities in this bottom-up way, starting from their participants and the things that they *do* as they interact, their properties change. Things start getting involved in many more communities, of greater and lesser degrees of distinctness and durability—what DeLanda (2006) calls 'territorialization'. Imagine a few strangers on the Underground spontaneously helping a person in a wheelchair to navigate a tricky station: although it has no name and lasts only minutes, this little community (made up of people, a wheelchair, stairs, ramps, elevators, perhaps a disease) pulls members together and makes a difference. Each member, even in that one day, will participate in dozens of other communities—and be shaped by them in small ways. How, then, should we expect a house, or a tube station, or an artefact to reflect the qualities of one community? If we want to understand the politics of houses in prehistory, a better place to start is to consider the diversity of roles houses played, the materiality of that engagement, and the range of communities that formed as a result.

Politics happens where communities share material. Although entities such as houses or lives participate in a wide range of communities, there is no guarantee that these different roles fit together seamlessly. To the contrary, much of the driving drama behind social life comes from the tension between the different roles people, houses, things and animals are cast in. Of course my landlord lacked a sense of urgency in facing the squirrels: the house was a budget line to him, and I was an email header. If these were the only roles the house and I played, the

story would be simple. But as they weren't, push had to come to shove. Figure 1.2 visualizes politics through time in this model: as a house (grey line) is woven into larger, active communities (coloured boxes) its form is tugged in one direction, then another, never reaching equilibrium. It was the house's involvement on different terms in different communities that shaped the state it ended up in—and that outcome helped define the relationship between different communities in the process.

We should think about houses as *multiples*: not single objects with single, definitive sets of characteristics, but as many kinds of social actor at once, held together tenuously by their shared materiality (Mol 2002; see §3.3). This not only captures the way houses fit into multiple communities; it captures the way they are known differently by different stakeholders, and this shapes the way they are acted on and through (Bailey 1990). The matter of the place forms a common tie between people who know it (and one another) in very different ways (Hinchcliffe 2010). It is not enough, then, to specify the array of communities a house may have been involved in. As I will do in coming chapters, we need to think about the way material changes refracted through the lives of other communities twined into the space.

Houses never exist in a moment; they come to be through time. As Figure 1.2 suggests, it would be foolish to try to capture material politics in a moment. By definition, politics is about the way things change. Houses at Çatalhöyük came into existence, not just by assembling bricks and mortar (Love 2013; Tung 2013c) but by gathering foundation offerings (Carter et al. 2015), plastering and furnishing the space (Matthews 2005b), maintaining walls and features, staging gatherings in the house or filling it with stored goods, tearing it down and rebuilding it. These kinds of practices involved different groups of people, from large gatherings to individuals, and they changed the qualities of the space (Stevanović 2012a).

When we start to look critically at houses' dynamics, characteristics appear that are rarely studied in prehistory. Did living arrangements form and fall apart rapidly (to the tune of years) or slowly (lasting decades)? Were the locations of kitchens at Çatalhöyük more reliable and stable than the locations of burial areas? For how long did the fact that a person was buried below a house floor in a specific location change the way that place was used? Of course, the nature of archaeological evidence means that some of these questions are difficult to

address in many settings, but Çatalhöyük houses with their many layers are amenable to such analysis (Haddow et al. 2016; Matthews 2005a, 2012). The broader point holds true beyond Çatalhöyük: it is not enough to characterize houses with single-value qualities ('x m^2 of floor space; y storage bins; z paintings'). Whether or not we have remarkable stratigraphy as at Çatalhöyük, the interesting thing about such qualities is not how they correlate or compare in a timeless framework, but how they came to be through time as houses were engaged in social processes (Bailey and McFadyen 2010; Eriksen 2016; Jones 2007; Kay 2020; Lucas 2013; Maxwell and Oliver 2017; Tringham 1995).

These three lines of thought point squarely toward a biographical approach to houses. Çatalhöyük houses were made up of many hundreds of layers and cuts, and we can trace the way they formed through time in remarkable detail. By looking critically at this process, and comparing the biographies of a population of houses, we can start to see how buildings' qualities emerged: how they were equipped or unequipped for specific roles, how burials and paintings were added into them and when these sequences suddenly stop, how houses materially relied on human action as much as people relied on houses. Along the way, we will learn a great deal about communities, and the way these were tied into the material world and especially tied into space. Ultimately, by looking at the intertwining of communities and space, we can start to look at the material politics that set lives in motion in the Neolithic and shaped where they went. The humble politics of houses will prove to have more to do with the vast emergent dynamics of the Neolithic than we might expect.

1.5 Material politics at Çatalhöyük: agenda

The coming chapters follow these premises into the rich details of Çatalhöyük houses' lives. After building up the historical context, conceptual and methodological background to the study in Chapters 2 and 3, the remaining four chapters tackle the challenge of material politics from different starting points. Although each chapter will touch on the four research aims stated above, Chapters 4-7 particularly focus each question in turn.

Chapter 2 explores the setting of this study in more detail, focusing on the politics of Neolithic settlements especially as these pertained to architecture. As I situate Çatalhöyük's history within the broader archaeological understanding of the Neolithic phenomenon, I begin to outline a tension between concepts that emphasize buildings' roles as dynamic, transformative entities, and archaeological methods that all too often cast structures as simple representations of single institutions (e.g. households or corporate groups). This is a

departure point for Chapter 3, which develops a more fluid understanding of houses and communities as part of a broader material political framework. I lay out a way to conceptualize space-making action as a process of activating spatial features on four registers (formation, insistence, embedding, and translation); as a navigation of contingencies and possibilities that come to the foreground at key moments; and as a process of *assembling* diverse materials with diverse traits and temporalities. Chapter 3 also moves beyond conceptual framing, detailing the relative timeline method used in this thesis to produce an evidentiary basis for exploring houses' biographies.

Chapter 4 takes its first steps into the biography of a single 66th-century house at Çatalhöyük: Building 131. Here I show how the relative timeline method brings previously-underemphasized dynamics of Çatalhöyük houses into focus, and challenges the impression of Çatalhöyük houses that we gain if we treat them as single, unchanging units. I introduce a number of ways of drawing out emergent political characteristics of space from a relative timeline, focusing on phenomena like tempos of change, changing affordances for routine practice, and changing sequences of intermittent, high-intensity practices like burial. These help us to define four key *political dimensions* of Building 131 that I will use throughout the following chapters to describe the changing politics of houses at Çatalhöyük. In this perspective, even seemingly-simple aspects of Building 131, like its mudbrick walls, prove to be politically complex, intertwining several more-than-human communities in the process of construction, maintenance, and memory.

Chapter 5 expands the study in Chapter 4 to show the power of a *comparative* biographical approach. It compares the biographies of eight broadly-contemporary houses in the same neighbourhood as Building 131, atop the northern prominence of the tell. I build the argument that 66th century houses were involved in a strong politics of *creative dependency,* in which buildings were deliberately made *not* to be self-sufficient and communities were multilateral, extensive and entangled. I also trace a surprising regularity in the way space-making activities materialized histories in houses, fitting present action to remembered pasts and projecting new conditions into the future. 66th century houses regularly switched from a *politics of depths*, where the salient history of a place laid invisibly below its surface most of the time, to a *politics of surfaces* where markers of past events were displayed at the surface. The way houses switched from depths- to surface-oriented space-making points to a particular centrality of houses that achieved social 'old age' and helps to qualify the role of history and memory in shaping communities in this period (e.g. Hodder and Pels 2010; Meskell 2008). It also reveals how 66th century communities actively redefined what a house could be—with consequences reaching far beyond the immediate contexts of individual actions.

In Chapter 6, I turn to a diachronic perspective, considering houses as drivers of historical change. Considering the biographies of early and later 7th millennium houses, I show how houses' roles in communities and their material dynamics changed substantially through seven centuries. The chapter explores two themes: the way houses articulated places and communities through history-making, and the way they centred daily practice and intertwined lives. These investigations help to define the waxing and waning of different dimensions of the site's politics. In this way, we can begin to understand the dramatic changes evident through the sequence at Çatalhöyük as emerging out of the action of historically-situated intimate communities. Chapter 6 also considers Çatalhöyük in the context of a rapidly-transforming 7th millennium world, where new possibilities for space-making evidently resonated across an entire region. Without establishing Çatalhöyük as a 'prime mover' of these changes, I suggest that the shifting materiality and temporality of communities that we see in Çatalhöyük houses' biographies after about 6500 BCE resonates with evidence from other Anatolian sites, showing how the dynamics of intimate communities across many sites can 'spill out' to transform vast landscapes.

Chapter 7 brings these observations into one frame and resituates Çatalhöyük in its larger historical context. In concluding, I argue that the material politics of Çatalhöyük entwined human life with space in different ways, shaping the horizons not just of individuals but whole societies. Although in this thesis I primarily trace the way *houses* organized knowledge, belonging, dependency, daily needs and social bonds, all of this would have 'spilled out' of the site's houses, resonating with broader landscapes of practice. The terms of 7th millennium life shaped the world in vast ways and small ones, but they were negotiated, in part, in the very material of intimate life.

Chapter 2

Neolithic houses, communities and histories: crossing thresholds at Çatalhöyük

2.1 Introduction

Unless you have lived your whole life on the Mediterranean coast, in Mesopotamia or a major river valley in eastern China, you have probably spent a great deal of time in places where maps once showed monsters and mythical creatures dwelling. It is easy, living somewhere we know to be mundane and looking at these old maps, to feel as if the real world was here all along, just waiting to be charted, surveyed and drawn. This largely misses the point of map monsters. They are not placeholders, nor predictions of what is normal in far-away places, but acknowledgement that the unknown can contain things that exceed everyday imagination. *That which could be* needs somewhere to live, and the space beyond the last known shore or river is as good a place as any. Regardless of where they put their fantastic beasts, it would be a strange people who thought that the entirety of the possible looked exactly like their own mundane existence.

Sometimes we imagine the past as the gradual discovery of our present, like today's world was waiting to appear all along. The Neolithic, in particular, is a classic 'originsland' (Gamble 2007), attributed with taking the initial steps toward modern economics, modern sedentary living, even modern cognition. Besides being reductive of the complexity of the past, 'originsland' archaeologies often display rather poor attention to what our own world is like (Robb and Harris 2013, 21–26). They tend to show us a present where we really live as households in homes that are really ours, where labour is paid and property is private, where wealth and power are truly hierarchical and space is unambiguously formed into states. The kind of world our politicians and economists would like to believe all history leads to, where the colours on our suspiciously monsterless maps are straightforward and true. I am not convinced that this captures everything significant about today's world. If the present is much fuller of possibilities, paradoxes and countercurrents than the received wisdom about our politics acknowledges, how much of the politics of the past are we missing when we link its dynamics to some caricature of ourselves?

This chapter situates the settlement at Çatalhöyük in its broader historical context. In many ways the narrative is conventional, covering the development of settled farming life in the

Middle East and its spread across Eurasia from the 7th millennium onward. There really were fundamental, directional changes in human lifeways at this time (Robb 2013), and Çatalhöyük is well poised to explore them. I build on a rich body of theorization of houses in this period, which goes far toward understanding how living in and with durable houses reshaped communities and politics when sedentary living was new, as well as the directions the politics of settled communities took when they were not so new.

However, I want to pay attention along the way to those parts of the established understanding that present history as something that built toward our particular present (or some selective vision of it). This tends to come at the expense of exploring past communities' vital involvement in reshaping their world. We have a growing evidentiary basis and a body of perceptive inquiry on which to build our histories of the Neolithic. Already the field has begun to move toward histories that (1) follow specifically Neolithic courses of change, rather than falling into the narrow vision of 'originsland' studies; (2) understand the diverse forms of collaboration and transformative action that defined Neolithic communities; and (3) involve materials, ecologies and other nonhuman actors in those collaborations. These are the trends that I want to seize on in developing a material political approach to houses in this thesis. Both the basis that already exists for such an approach, and some outstanding challenges or baggage, will become clear as we explore the Neolithic, and Çatalhöyük's place in it, here.

2.2 Setting the scene: settled life in the Middle East and beyond

Settled life became a possibility long before it became the norm. In the Middle East, evidence of seasonal or multi-seasonal dwellings dates back over 20,000 years at Ohalo II in Israel and Kharaneh IV in Jordan (Maher et al. 2012; Nadel 2017; Ramsey et al. 2018). Some 10,000 years later, Late Epipalaeolithic foragers sometimes built even more substantial structures (e.g. Benz et al. 2015; Özkaya 2009; Richter 2017), and likely alternated between more consolidated and more mobile lifestyles as circumstances changed (Wengrow and Graeber 2015). There is also evidence of sedentary or semi-sedentary foragers in the European Mesolithic, for example in the Danube Gorges (Borić 2002; Borić and Miracle 2004). However, the possibility of staying in place for an extended period of time did not come to exclude more mobile arrangements, and throughout this period seasonal mobility and foraging remained the baseline lifestyle of people across the Middle East and beyond.

In the 9th millennium BCE, by contrast, increasingly substantial settlements began appearing throughout the Middle East, from the Negev in the south to Cyprus, central Anatolia and the

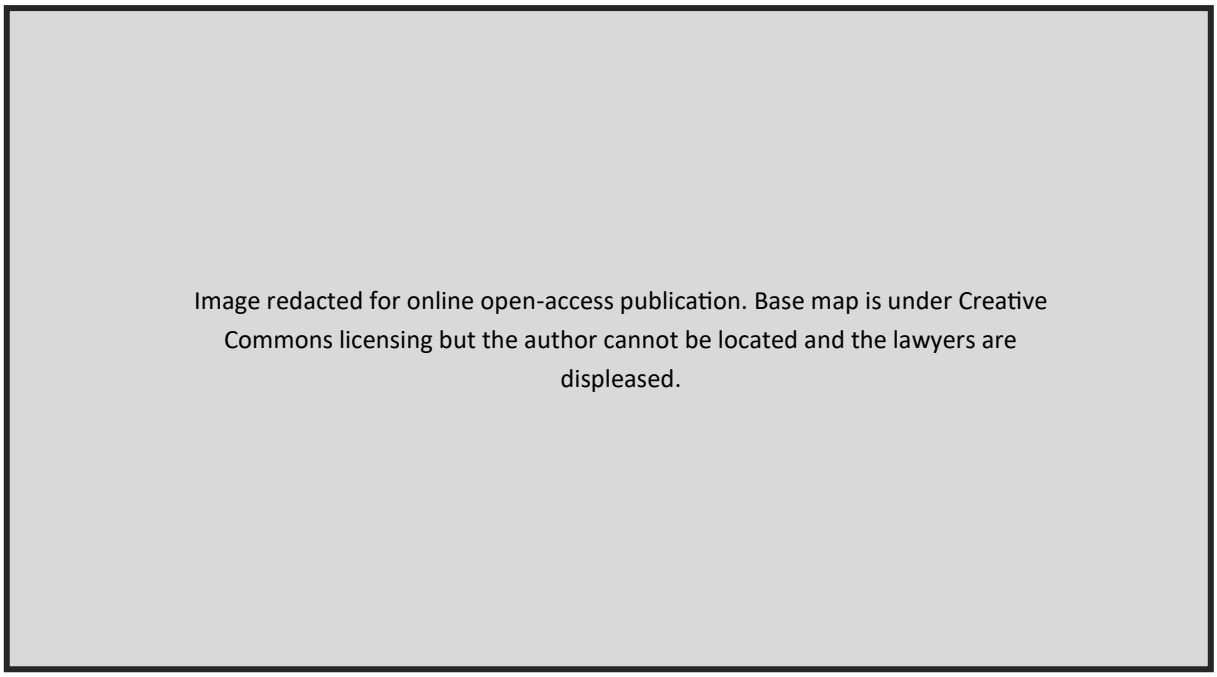

Figure 2.1. The first widespread appearance of settled farming life in the Middle East and southeastern Europe, showing core zone (striped) and 7th-millennium expansions (checkered). Base map: Wikimedia Commons.

Zagros. Older theories suggested a single point of origin for farming (likely in the Levant) and a steady spread outward into supposedly peripheral regions like Anatolia and Cyprus. However, it is now clear that the range of practices, technologies and social dynamics that we call 'Neolithic' developed diffusely. Thus, for example, intensive exploitation and potential gardening of wild precursor crops is suggested from the Taurus foothills to the Levant (Willcox 2012, Table 9.4) and possibly further afield in Mediterranean Greece (Chapman 1994; cf. Perlès 2003); 'protodomestic' caprids (managed morphologically-wild herds) have been identified in central Anatolia, Upper Mesopotamia, and Cyprus (Buitenhuis 1997; Vigne 2011, 177; Vigne et al. 2011). Substantial architecture precedes farming at sites like Göbekli Tepe in Upper Mesopotamia (Schmidt 2010), and at Körtik Tepe in the eastern Taurus (Benz et al. 2015). Although the dates for these developments vary by a few centuries and there certainly were movements of crops, animals, and people in this time, it is impossible to identify a single 'spark' behind the Neolithic: in various forms and articulations, settled foraging/gardening and hunting/herding lifeways came to predominate throughout the region by the later centuries of the 9th millennium (Figure 2.1).

Although Gamble (2007) is surely correct that these centuries-long and geographically uneven transitions are different than the recent political upheavals we call 'revolutions', it is nevertheless clear that the character of life in the Middle East changed fundamentally from the 9th millennium onward. People used different kinds of skill, labour and material in changing landscapes and ecologies; they aspired to different kinds of lives, and made

different kinds of communities in the process. Ultimately, settled agrarian life spread from its Middle Eastern homeland (and others in Asia, Africa and the Americas), becoming the norm across most of Eurasia before the emergence of early state-like systems in the late 4th millennium. In this sense, the Neolithic was a total, epochal transformation of human lifeways. Certainly this is the way it is cast in most archaeological accounts: a wave of advance washing fitfully but intractably across the globe.

It is interesting, then, that during more than 2,000 years of development, many Neolithic practices do not seem to have travelled much beyond a circumscribed area. By the time Çatalhöyük was first settled around 7100 BCE, settled life had become ubiquitous in the Middle East, but was rare beyond this core zone (Düring 2013; Özdoğan 2014; Rosenstock 2019). Despite familiarity with wild cereals and herd animals in places like Greece (see below), the domestication of flora and fauna likewise remained a broadly Middle Eastern phenomenon. Perhaps this should not surprise us: 'culture is not like a virus' (Kotsakis 2019, 225). Spreading around the globe is not a default behaviour of human groups or technologies: if people, objects or behaviours move across a map, it is as part of historically-specific social dynamics often rooted in intimate lives rather than macro-political institutions (cf. Coontz 1988; Gosden 2005). But, after two millennia from which there is neither much evidence of established farmers migrating or land-grabbing outside of the core zone, nor of the full-blown adoption of farming or sedentism by people west of Central Anatolia, both of these things became almost definitional dynamics of the Neolithic.

Exactly *what* changed in the 7th millennium remains a focus of research and debate, especially as the pre-Neolithic and initial Neolithic record of western Turkey and the Aegean has been explored more extensively in this century. Çilingiroğlu (2016, 32, 35) captures many archaeologists' prior assumptions in describing the 'somewhat isolated living of well-established and highly mobile Aegean foragers' participating in a 'rather closed Aegean network'. This view, supported by long-divergent discourses and research traditions in Greece and Turkey (Horejs 2019, 69-70), forms the basis for reconstructions of a 'frontier' somewhere in western Turkey, dividing foragers and farmers from one another's worlds (e.g. Brami 2015; 2019; Düring 2013; Rosenstock 2019). Perhaps the Neolithic never spread much west of central Anatolia, because of a near-total social disconnect with Aegean peoples.

This view has become increasingly difficult to maintain as new excavations bring to light cultural connections between the core Neolithic zone and neighbouring areas, and reveal the diversity and experimentality of Mesolithic populations in both inland western Turkey and the Aegean (Baird 2019). 9th and 8th millennium people west of the core zone were not

passive bystanders to the Neolithic. To the contrary, several lines of evidence engage the Mesolithic world in the Neolithic one, and vice-versa:

- Tracing of lithic sources and knapping techniques around the Aegean as well as architectural techniques suggests shared familiarity between Neolithic people on Cyprus and Mesolithic maritime foragers (e.g. Carter 2016; Çilingiroğlu 2016; Çilingiroğlu et al. 2020; Horejs et al. 2015; Horejs 2019).

- Collections of grinding stones, sickles, and/or morphologically wild cereals have been found at a number of 9th millennium sites in western Turkey and Greece (Perles 2003, 102; see also Sampson et al. 2002, 61-2; Takaoğlu et al. 2014), suggesting that people around the Aegean made increasing use of (wild, or maybe incipiently managed) cereal crops as part of their diet, at the same time as their Middle Eastern neighbours developed fully domesticated cereal-focused foodways.

- A small number of sites attest to sedentism or at least substantial architectural investment, and engagement with Middle Eastern conceptual/ideological changes as well. Maroulas, an early-mid 9th millennium settlement on the Greek island of Kythnos, consists of ovoid stone-walled and stone-floored houses, some with subfloor burials, deposits of curated human bone among artefact clusters, and feasting deposits (Sampson et al. 2002; see Facorellis et al. 2010 for revised dates), all practices familiar from the core zone of the Neolithic and especially resonant with the Neolithic of Cyprus (Horejs 2019). Late 9th millennium Girmeler, an inland site in southwestern Turkey, consists of ovoid wattle-and-daub structures with plastered floors, subfloor burial and substantial furnishing; its excavators (Takaoğlu et al. 2014) relate the site architecturally to Boncuklu Höyük, one of Çatalhöyük's 9th-8th millennium predecessors, while also noting lithic similarities to Aegean assemblages.

- Finally, a few sequenced genomes from the period suggest shared maternal-line (mitochondrial) ancestry between 'Anatolian farmers' and 'Aegean foragers' (Hofmanová et al. 2016; cf. Brami 2019, 28). Other studies claim deeper genetic similarity between Anatolian and Aegean populations (Feldman et al. 2019) and even show a subtle convergence of genotypes in the two regions after the Last Glacial Maximum (Fu et al. 2016), although all of these assertions must be taken lightly due to extremely small sample sizes and limited theorization of genetic data.

These developments help to clarify the outstanding question of the 7th millennium. The 9th millennium's period of disparate, locally-diverse innovations was not strictly confined to the Middle East. In the traditional culture-historical terminology of the region[1], archaeologists would not hesitate to describe sites like Maroulas and Girmeler, with their substantial architecture, house-oriented ritual and exploitation of cereals, as 'PPNA villages'—if only they were located a few hundred kilometres further east. To some extent, then, the moniker 'Mesolithic' serves to conceal the real interconnectedness of foraging populations, farming populations, and populations practicing some mix of the two (that is, most 9th millennium populations even in the Middle East). Even mobile populations beyond the core zone had many potential lines of connection with more settled and/or farming neighbours.

The Middle East was not set apart by a sharp frontier, but rather by divergent historical trajectories. What defines the core zone of the Neolithic is that new ways of life, from sheep domestication to the plastering of skulls, arose in diverse areas and circulated, so that they eventually formed an integrated range of practices, skills, understandings and commitments that appear ubiquitously from central Anatolia to the southern Levant. In western Anatolia and the Aegean, scattered, incipient sedentism, cereal exploitation, domestic burial and the like remained just that: scattered and incipient. The question is not, 'why did the Neolithic only begin to spread in the 7th millennium?' It is 'why did the Neolithic only form into an integrated lifeway in part of the area where constituent practices developed?' Or in conventional terms: 'Why is there the beginnings of a PPNA in the Aegean, but never a PPNB?' And finally: 'why did that change in the 7th millennium?'

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[1] The convention first developed by Kathleen Kenyon at Jericho and since expanded to cover the entire core zone, recognizes three basic cultural 'stages' in the Neolithic of the Middle East (see Kuijt and Goring-Morris 2002 for a far-reaching overview):

- Pre-pottery Neolithic A (PPNA): ca. 9500—7500 BCE. Small villages of sedentary foragers, simple architecture, management of wild species and incipient agriculture.
- Pre-pottery Neolithic B (PPNB): ca. 7500—7000/6500 BCE. Large towns, integrated farming/herding economy, complex architecture, incipient practice of potting.
- Pottery Neolithic (PN): ca. 7000/6500—6000 BCE. Small towns of sedentary farmers/herders, often even more complex and substantial architecture, abundant pottery, significant re-locations via foundation and abandonment of settlements.

Needless to say, this is a very rough rubric that disregards most of the real local variation, historical dynamics, staggered timing and diffuse development of the Neolithic phenomenon. I deploy it here strictly as a rhetorical link between the history under discussion and the conventional narratives of the field.

A site like Çatalhöyük, occupied beginning in 7100 BCE, cannot shed much light on the initial divergence of Neolithic and Mesolithic lifeworlds. Those answers surely lie with the investigation of 9th and 8th millennium trajectories in both the Aegean and the Middle East, whereby we can understand that politics that integrated practices, landscapes, social relations and understandings in different regions. But Çatalhöyük spanned another foundational change, both chronologically and geographically. From around the 67th century onward, there is a clear explosion of permanent agrarian settlements well west of the core zone of the Neolithic (Figure 2.1; cf. Brami 2015; 2017; Düring 2013; Rosenstock 2019). Radiocarbon data and excavations in central Asia are sparser, but it is possible that the eastward expansion of settled farming from the Zagros into modern eastern Iran and Turkmenistan also began in the mid-7th millennium (Fazeli Nashli and Matthews 2013), with further suggestions of genetic flow from the Iranian plateau and/or the Caucasus into Anatolia (Mathieson et al. 2018) hinting at the multi-directional nature of the relationships involved. Some new 67th century settlements in Aegean Turkey, like Çukuriçi and Ulucak, look similar to central Anatolian settlements in terms of architecture, material culture, and ritual practices (Brami 2017; Çilingiroğlu 2019), and may represent several channels of human migration along long-established sea routes as well as overland movement (Horejs et al. 2015; Marciniak 2019; Perlès 2003; Reingruber 2011). Others, for example the 'Fikirtepe culture' of the northern Marmara region and the early Greek Neolithic sites in Thessaly, integrate Middle Eastern domesticates within novel settlement forms, and may be the work of previously foraging populations adapting their own spatial culture to a more-sedentary, farming taskscape (e.g. Düring 2011; Kotsakis 2008; 2019; Özbal and Gerritsen 2019; Reingruber 2011). Meanwhile, in the core Neolithic parts of Anatolia, the mid-late 7th millennium saw substantial reorganization of long-established settlement patterns and social systems. Çatalhöyük itself reached peak size as the farming world first expanded, then grew smaller and less dense a few generations later (§2.4.3 below). Can Hasan III, a similar large tell to the east of Çatalhöyük, was abandoned around this time (Thissen 2002). Simultaneously, new, smaller and more diverse settlements appear, reflecting new ways of integrating settlements into larger productive landscapes and regional networks (Baird 2005; Marciniak 2019; Marciniak and Czerniak 2007; Özdoğan 2014).

A number of prime movers have been suggested for the transformations that occurred in the mid-late 7th millennium. These range from demonstrable climate changes around 6200 BCE (e.g. Akkermans et al. 2015; Roffet-Salque et al. 2018) or localized ecological deteriorations around large sites (Rollefson 1989) to the disruption of deep-rooted symbols of authority by the domestication of 'dangerous game' like the aurochs (Cauvin 2000; Hodder 1990). Although all of these may have played a part in local historical trajectories, none has the right timing, duration, or ubiquity to account for the transformation of the Neolithic from a

regional peculiarity to an expanding phenomenon. Ultimately, it seems unlikely that a single smoking gun could set off the sweeping yet locally-diverse, dramatic but centuries-long chains of events that we see played out in the archaeological record. As Robb (2013) argues, the challenge is in grasping emergent causation: how a variety of factors come together to shape the way communities can create change, so that a vast range of circumstance and actions at different scales point the overall whole in a certain 'direction'.

We can put this systematic change in spatial terms. Something changed in the way farming life attached people to places, or set them in motion, in the 7th millennium BCE. It was a change on the same scale as the one 2,000 years earlier, that turned long-term settlement from an occasional and easily-abandoned social strategy to one that monopolized landscapes and bound generations of people to the same place. Understanding the ways lives were twined together in relation to space, forming communities and collaborations around architecture, can key us into the heart of this large-scale transformation. The intricacies of small mudbrick houses on the edge of the core zone may have a great deal more purchase on the grand-scale dramas of the period than our intuitive notion of houses as humble places might suggest. To get at *how,* however, we need to think about how Neolithic houses arranged relationships and drew people into commitments to space—and how the politics of houses spilled out into other spaces and social dynamics.

2.3 Houses and politics in the Neolithic

As sedentary living was one of the hallmarks of the Neolithic across Eurasia, Neolithic houses and domestic life have received a great deal more attention from archaeologists than houses in most other contexts. Archaeologists have examined Neolithic houses from perspectives of economy, identity and performance, phenomenology and embodied experience, belief and symbology. There is a general consensus that the Neolithic saw houses *institutionalized* in new ways—although there is some variation in ideas about what an institution *is*. Some accounts, for example, privilege daily economy and the management of productive activities in their accounts of Neolithic houses (Bogaard et al. 2009; Wright 2000). Others emphasize ritual performances that may have asserted a discrete household identity (Baird, Fairbairn and Martin 2017; Carter et al. 2015; Guerrero et al. 2009), or unintentional ways that living together in durable dwellings habituated people into new kinds of relational structures (Hastorf 2012; Hodder 2012; Hodder and Cessford 2004). In any of these perspectives, however, emerging conceptualizations of houses, the work of keeping a house standing and the motions of daily life restructured Neolithic society, drawing people into new kinds of commitments, decision-making processes and demanding

relationships with the material world. Here I briefly review these lines of thought in relation to Neolithic houses more broadly, before turning to the specific historical trajectory that played out at Çatalhöyük in the 7th millennium.

2.3.1 History and the institutionalization of the house

The dwellings of mobile foragers, and even some sedentary ones, tend to be unelaborate affairs, small single-space structures that can be put up or torn down in a day or two. Mobile foragers organize practice and space differently than settled people, as a set of enchained nodes, movements and potential relationships rather than homes, territories and long-term commitments (Wilson 1988). Although 'nodes' may be long lived, people's arrangement relative to them shifts steadily. In such a world, one's dwelling forms at most a temporary way of situating oneself in relation to others. The people you wake up among today may not be the same ones you wake up among a few months or years from now, so there is little weight to the statement 'those people live together'. The most eye-catching material productions and performances that foraging people assemble tend to elaborate shared 'nodes', mobile bodies, or both, from rock art, jewelry and dress to hunts, dances and ritual processions.

The longer-term settlements that begin to appear among Epipalaeolithic foragers and the earliest Neolithic foragers-gardeners in the Middle East thus represent a new form of space-making, with new potentials for communities to emerge in relation to durable structures. Keeping a structure standing for years or decades while living in it year-round was a commitment to investing labour in a place, and in other people who shared in that commitment. Having a more stable architecture of residence created new relationships, such as neighbours and neighbourhoods, or gave old ones (partnership; kinship; parent-child relations) a new material medium to play out in. As I will discuss below, residence eventually offered a new way of organizing subsistence, craft, and perhaps even territory. Unsurprisingly, starting in the early Neolithic and intensifying through time, we begin to see a greater range of art and performance oriented around houses (e.g. Baird, Fairbairn and Martin 2017; Benz et al. 2015; Guerrero et al. 2009; Hodder 2018), suggesting that buildings were not only shelters but hubs of memory and social identity.

Commitment to the continuation of a structure gave architecture an institutional quality in the early Neolithic. Human life is messy. People are born, die suddenly or slowly, form bonds or fall out; crops or wild resources flourish or fail; walls begin to give way. Living arrangements are, by definition, temporary. And yet, in the Neolithic, when push came to shove, lives often seem to have been rearranged around architecture, rather than vice versa.

This was especially true in cases, reaching back to the Epipalaeolithic but especially intensifying in Neolithic Anatolia, where aging structures were dismantled and rebuilt on the same location, forming centuries-long building sequences (Hodder 2018). These instances suggest that houses could take on durable identities as institutions, above and beyond their roles in specific human lives and circumstances.

The phenomenon of long-lived and ritually elaborate dwellings has been discussed in relation to a broader Neolithic emphasis on history-making. As Watkins (2006) has termed it, Neolithic architecture assembled space, human and animal bodies, and often dramatic representations of bodies to craft *theatres of memory,* where experiences of the past's presence shaped human relationships into new forms. In different ways, Neolithic buildings arranged people in relation to material vestiges of the past: not just houses' forms, but buried bodies, curated skulls and other remains, feasting trophies and dramatic artwork (e.g. Baird ,Fairbairn and Martin 2017; Kuijt 2008; Meskell 2008; Peters and Schmidt 2004). And they provided space for staging all of these elements in political performances. Histories, constructed in a variety of media but ultimately integrated into the physical shape of living space, informed places and fuelled negotiation of people's roles in ongoing life.

Precisely what kind of institutions harnessed this memory-shaping power of architecture has been widely debated. The strong emphasis on continuity, repetition and ritual elaboration in Neolithic houses has sometimes been linked to Lévi-Strauss's (1982) concept of the '*house society*'. In 'house societies', human-oriented principles like kinship are of secondary importance to the continuation and advancement of (usually named) corporate estates (Hodder and Pels 2010; Kuijt 2018; Tringham 2000; cf. Beck (Ed) 2007; Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Joyce and Gillespie 2000). Perhaps houses, singly or as groups, were also capital-H Houses that people could belong to and needed to perpetuate. Other possibilities are that houses were vehicles for other kinds of institution, such as kin groups, moieties or corporate neighbourhoods (Düring 2006; Pilloud 2009), or religious 'secret societies' (Hayden 2018; Mills 2014). Such institutions may not have explicitly articulated maintaining houses as a key goal, but could deploy the history of a place as part of political strategies nonetheless, leading to the observed tendency to anchor houses in specific locations and histories.

Although a special focus on history, especially attached to dwellings, was deep-rooted in the Middle East, there were changes in the performance of history over the course of the Neolithic. Houses were focal points for memory and identity from the Epipalaeolithic onward, but especially in the 9th and 8th millennia they often worked alongside larger elaborate structures and open-air performance spaces. These took a variety of forms, from

the 'Skull Building' containing massed human remains and a blood-saturated plinth at Çayönü (Loy and Wood 1989; Özdoğan and Özdoğan 1989), the body-filled tower of Jericho (Kenyon 1981; Kuijt 1996) and the large, red-painted but otherwise empty structures HV and T at Aşıklı (Esin et al. 1991; Özbaşaran 2011), to elaborate non-residential sites on hilltops, such as the dramatic circular structures at Göbekli Tepe (Schmidt 2010; but see Banning 2011) and the enigmatic compound at Musular (Duru and Özbaşaran 2005). Many such sites and structures had disappeared by the 7th millennium, as history-making in houses may have become increasingly focal. The way histories and identities were performed changed further in the mid-7th millennium, just as the Neolithic began to expand: older practices, such as building superimposition and intramural burial, were carried out more selectively, while forms of artistic production (e.g. painting) once frequently affixed to houses instead focused on portable media like ceramics (Buchli 2014; Hodder 1990; Last 1998; but see Düring 2011, 131–132). Meanwhile, the dramatic performance of house burning, which has been linked to closure rituals and the sanctioning of spatial transformation, originated or became common around this time and became a defining feature of the Neolithic across the Balkans, Anatolia and some parts of Upper Mesopotamia (Akkermans and Verhoeven 1995; Akkermans et al. 2012; Chapman 1999; Stevanović 1997; Twiss et al. 2008).

A fuller discussion of the ways identities, institutions, histories and performances were stitched together across the Neolithic would be too massive to undertake here (see overviews in Düring 2011; Hodder 2018; Kuijt and Goring-Morris 2002). Even this brief overview, however, brings to light some of the key insights and outstanding challenges that we face in trying to understand Neolithic houses in relationship to communities, institutions, and historical transformation. Houses materially structured memory and gave a powerful scaffolding for identity in the Neolithic. From this broad observation, however, there are a variety of institutional possibilities that we can imagine, ranging from 'house societies' to secret (and elite?) ritual societies, or simply a particularly history-informed version of familiar kinship and household ritual. There are also a range of performances, materialities and spatialities involved: what difference did it make when communities' histories were constructed by superimposing mudbrick walls, gathering for body-manipulation rituals in a non-domestic structure, or setting bodies and figurines on the roof of a house and burning it to the ground (Verhoeven 2000)? Finally, there are outstanding questions about the link between performance, history, and identity, on the one hand, and the messy practicalities of daily living arrangements on the other. Although houses could well have taken on an institutional character, as Houses or otherwise, what difference did this make as people sorted out a working relationships around things like foodways, planting and herding, sleeping arrangements, reproduction and communal decision-making? A number of studies

have begun tracing out answers to some of these questions; but a closer look at the dynamics of houses in this thesis will suggests dimensions to the challenge that we have not yet fully engaged at all (§4.5).

2.3.2 Domestic economies, household autonomy and inequality

Houses also transformed Neolithic society through the ways they organized daily practice and intimate relationships. Although less flashy than setting the house on fire, cooking a meal, storing up a harvest or sleeping on a raised platform together are powerful social practices that help to intensify community commitments that art and ritual elaborated upon. Many authors have therefore focused primary attention on houses as economic factors, and particularly on the emergence of the household as a way of arranging the Neolithic economy.

Foragers' daily economies tend to be structured around sharing. Although many place harsh social sanctions on accumulation (e.g. Lee 1969), archaeologists and anthropologists have noted how much of the levelling work is done through the spatiality and temporality of forager life itself (Layton 1986; Wilson 1988; Wright 2000). At least in reasonably abundant ecosystems, food stores tend to be modest and dwellings shallow. Materials are kept in plain sight of neighbours and passersby, and food preparation and crafting activities are done in full view of the broader encampment. Any accumulation of material is subject to both the vicissitudes of hunting and gathering forays (it is difficult to reliably generate a surplus for oneself) and the oversight of the larger group (it is difficult to avoid sharing any surplus resources or goods one does have). Although foragers may at times designate leaders, elders, shamans, or other powerful figures, this tends to have little to do with who has enough to eat, better or worse shelter, or more or less access to necessary tools and goods (Wengrow and Graeber 2015). The politics of egalitarianism is built into the spaces that foragers make and inhabit, and the way materials flow through them.

Early Neolithic settlements do not seem to have departed fundamentally from this model. The earliest, pre-pottery Neolithic A (PPNA) dwellings in the Levant and Cyprus are small, shallow, and generally lack 'back rooms', kitchens, or anything else to suggest that the daily economy was being drawn indoors (Aurenche 1981; Aurenche and Kozłowski 1999; Flannery 2002; Kuijt and Goring-Morris 2002). Likewise, the earliest excavated houses in Anatolia, e.g. at the base of the Aşıklı Höyük sequence, Boncuklu Höyük and Körtik Tepe (Baird, Fairbairn and Martin 2017; Benz et al. 2015; Özbaşaran 2011), are simple ovoid structures, usually containing a hearth, but with little suggestion that they meaningfully divided the site's economy into discrete segments. In some cases there is evidence that

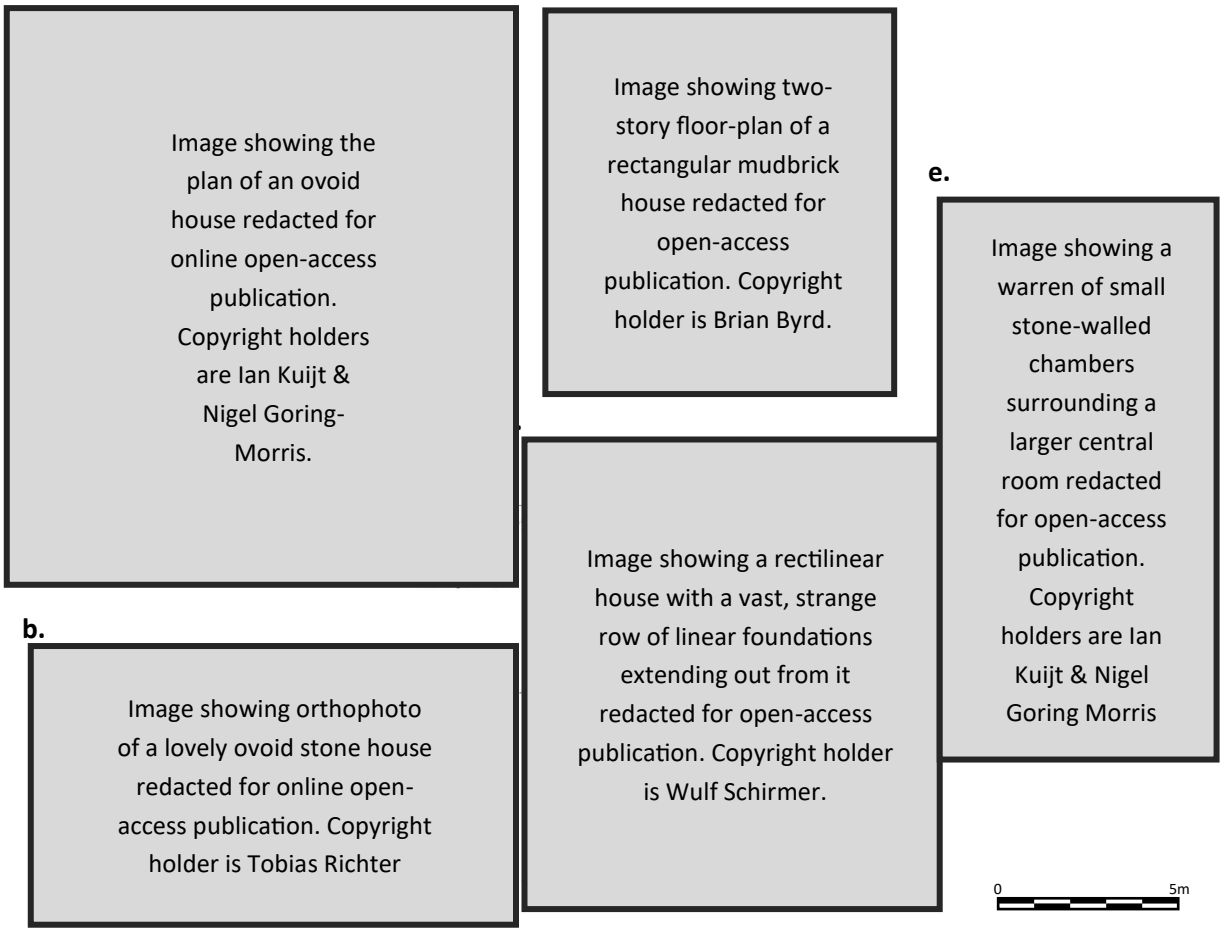


Figure 2.2. House plans from early (PPNA) and later (PPNB) pre-pottery Neolithic contexts: (a) PPNA building at Jericho, West Bank (modified from Kuijt and Goring-Morris 2002, fig. 2). (b) PPNA building at Shubayqa 1, Jordan (modified from Richter 2017, fig. 4). (c) Two-story PPNB building from Beidha, Israel, showing upper (top) and lower floors (modified from Byrd 1994, fig. 8). (d) PPNB 'Grill' plan building from Çayönü Tepesi, southeastern Turkey (modified from Schirmer 1990, fig. 3). (e) 'Segmented' PPNB building from Es-Safyia, Jordan (modified from Kuijt and Goring-Morris 2002, fig. 14).

storage was managed communally among entire settlements or large subgroups, as in structures in Jordan interpreted to be shared storehouses (Finlayson et al. 2011). Other practices like cooking and crafting also likely took place primarily in open, visible locations (Wright 2000), and there is little suggestion that the group of people who slept in a given structure formed a meaningful economic working unit.

However, later Neolithic sites reveal an increasing role for houses in structuring the spatiality and sociality of daily economic life (Figure 2.2). By the 8th millennium, houses in many parts of the Neolithic began to incorporate internal hearths, ovens, storage bins and benches or shelves, suggesting that a range of practices moved inside of buildings (Byrd 1994, 2002; Henry, Kadowaki and Bergin 2014; Wright 2000). In some parts of the Middle East, houses began to be divided into multiple rooms with different furnishings, or contained

two stories with different functionality (Byrd 2002; Kuijt and Goring-Morris 2002). The involvement of domestic architecture in the taskscape was substantially changed by these developments.

The increasing range of in-house practices has been related to the emergence of the 'domestic mode of production' (Sahlins 1974) or the 'economically autonomous household' (Flannery 2002). In this model, the management of productive activities is carried out first and foremost by small, usually coresident groups of people (or at most, extended households occupying a few buildings), with sharing and coordination between households occurring more rarely and perhaps more markedly in events like feasts and rituals. Drawing day-to-day practices like storage, cooking and craft production inside of buildings may have undercut older, more communal ways of managing resources and created new kinds of relationships that challenged more flexible, forager-like ways of bonding to one another. Where 'shallow' dwellings exposed stored-up materials to communal levelling mechanisms, in-house storage permitted concealment and selective sharing (Byrd 1994; Bogaard et al. 2009). Meals and daily labour such as grain-grinding are key ways that people bond with one another, and moving these inside of buildings meant that co-residents of a house may have developed an intimacy that they did not share with non-residents (Hastorf 2012; Rosenberg 2008; Wright 2000). If the concentration of intimate relationships among co-residents and the ability to withhold production from communal sharing mechanisms amounted to a nascent concept of private property, questions of access and inheritance, and internal power dynamics—effectively, who is allowed into the house, and who has a say in how 'messy' events like births, deaths, partnerships and break-ups are managed—would have become newly important.

The perception of indoor cooking and storage as hallmarks of the economically autonomous household has led to a distinctive way of studying Neolithic houses that have these features: what in Chapter 3 I will call 'summarizing approaches'. If the main organizing institution in later Neolithic economies was the household, perhaps houses' material remains—their sizes, attributes, and contents—help us to understand the characteristics, individually and in comparison to one another, of 'modular [social] units . . . [that] acted as the fundamental social agents' in the past (Bogaard, Fochesato and Bowles 2019, 1131). In extreme examples, the mere presence of hearths inside houses may be taken as evidence of a social structure premised on private property ownership (one owner/agent per house with a hearth) (Rosenberg and Redding 2002; cf. Byrd 1994). From there, the size of houses may be used to ascertain the number of members in each household unit (Byrd 2002; Düring 2007), while changes in the average size or shape of houses over centuries or millennia in a region may be read as evidence of competitive positioning between social actors (Flannery 2002). Houses'

summed contents (differences in furnishing, artefacts, storage space) may be taken to represent gradients of prosperity, centrality, specialization or property ownership between households in a given society, allowing us to perceive nascent inequalities or even status difference between Neolithic people (e.g. Bogaard,Fochesato and Bowles 2019; Wright 2014). And episodes where a site's or region's houses become suddenly simpler and more homogeneous in their contents have been read in terms of social 'collapse' or simplification (Simmons 2002). A number of authors have stressed alternative economies, especially of ritual objects, that may have linked households together in a broader social fabric (e.g. Kuijt 1996, 2018; Rollefson 2005), and some propose more nuanced, heterarchical socioeconomic structures for Neolithic settlements on this basis (e.g. Finlayson et al. 2011; Hodder 2014b; Kuijt 2002, 312–315, 2018). Nevertheless, in much of the field, the concept of the economically autonomous household remains the basis of our methods for understanding the material basis of domestic life across vast distances in space and time.

I will continue this discussion in Chapter 3, where I ask what kind of social information an excavated house really *is* (§3.2). I express serious reservations about using summarizing methods to study social structure: so much in them depends on our starting assumptions about the kinds of communities that buildings represent and the kinds of things that communities work toward. Chapter 4 demonstrates further how the assumption that buildings represent any one kind of community at all is a problematic one. But the broader concern with domestic space and economy has raised crucially important questions that will guide the analysis in coming chapters. How *did* specifically Neolithic ways of putting food on the table, making and circulating artefacts, or planning for adversity shape the kinds of bonds and communities that they formed? And how did these kinds of everyday bonds spill out into broader concepts of community and far-reaching historical dynamics such as the rise of large sites, their dispersal, or the movement of settled farming people out from their deep-rooted homelands in the 7th millennium? These kinds of questions can take us deeply into the kinds of dynamics that penetrated Çatalhöyük houses and the broader 7th millennium world.

2.3.3 Architecture extends: spatial entanglements and emergent causation

Behind the model of Neolithic houses as economic and conceptual institutions are questions about other spaces, materials, and movements. If households built their own homes, where did the mudbrick come from—and were clay sources managed by households as well (cf. Love 2013; Tung 2013c)? If they managed their own food economy, did each house have a herd, a garden, a pasture, a hunting ground connected to it (cf. Halstead 1996; Henton 2013; Pearson 2013)? Although structures can be spatial anchors for daily practice, history-making

and performance, they are never self-contained worlds. Architecture extends through landscapes as materials, people and affects that shape buildings move through the world (Hill 2013; Harris 2016). In doing so, it entangles domestic life with other dynamics, driven by other kinds of sociality and materiality.

The recognition that houses' existence is contingent on other kinds of spaces and actions has sporadically driven research on Neolithic settlements since the emergence of cultural ecology approaches in the 1980s. For example, Rollefson among others (Kingery, Vandiver and Prickett 2013; Rollefson 1989; Rollefson and Köhler-Rollefson 1993) has argued that the dispersal of large PPNB settlements in the southern Levant around 6500 BCE was driven by the way domestic practice transformed the landscapes around settlements. In particular, the use of large amounts of lime plaster—a fuel-intensive pyrotechnology—to surface buildings may have created deforested areas around large settlements without effective collective planning. In the short term cleared areas may have provided convenient pasture and field space (leading to growth of the settlement) but in the medium term use of high-relief deforested space for agriculture would have eroded soils and pushed necessary woodland resources farther away from the settlement (leading to dispersal). Making and coating houses in the southern Levant with lime plaster was a meaningful, repetitive and labour-intensive practice, carried out with a fervour that challenges straightforward functional explanation; other notable associations of lime include the construction of large figurines or effigies, and the reconstruction of flesh on the face of curated skulls (Hodder and Meskell 2011; Kuijt 2008). Thus, if this reconstruction is correct, domestic practice with highly specific meanings, motivations and associations tied southern Levantine houses and their inhabitants into the landscape in specific, transformative ways, creating a threshold below which settlements tended to grow, and above which they were prone to ecological degradation and dispersal. Put otherwise, houses did not emerge *ex nihilo* and stand on strictly their own terms; they emerged out of broader, dynamic ecologies of things, places, knowledge and practices.

This kind of understanding of houses has become more thinkable as the 'new materialism' directs archaeologists' attention to the range of powerful agencies and contingencies that forests, soils, plasters and the like bring to social life (Given 2018; Harris 2013). Hodder (2012) has captured this in his concept of entanglement, investigating the webs of contingency that emerge when humans depend on things (and vice versa). The nuances of entanglement theory, and other forms of relational materialist thinking, are not central here (see §3.3). However, the broad point is that archaeologists have begun to think more critically about how practices and materials in houses became meaningful through a variety of practices, some of them in the house and some far removed. Following entanglements and

relations has thus begun to explode the neat confines of the individual building or settlement, intertwining kinds of analysis and data that archaeologists conventionally handle through very different frames (Hodder 2015). It prompts us to think about the emergent qualities of these larger assemblages, like the soil-loss threshold in the Levant or the no-return directionality of the transition to farming in Europe (Robb 2013) rather than seeking single prime movers behind every historical change. And relational approaches also open up Neolithic households to a wider range of active participants—lime, trees and soils as well as human beings, in the example above—which helps to critically expand the range of dynamics that archaeologists consider when understanding change (§3.3.1).

2.3.4 Discussion: institutions, pathways and thresholds

Neolithic houses get to the heart of questions about how living together in architecture gives shape and meaning to human communities and histories. Whether by building houses one atop the other to create meaningful, durable places or by grinding grain for a single meal together, people's actions in and through houses linked them to one another, engaged them with the material world and oriented their efforts toward particular futures (futures where this particular house or House still stands; futures where the bonds formed over grindstones endured). Studying them is a powerful window into life in the 7th millennium, and resonates strongly with the political concerns I began this thesis with.

On the other hand, it is sometimes challenging to ask these questions without pinning our answers to a set narrative. Even as studies have grown more sophisticated as new data and new debate hones our attention, there is a perceptible metanarrative behind several classic 'thresholds' in the Neolithic and the way these are understood. Figure 2.3 presents a sketch of this narrative. From a flexible, mobile version of kinship, architecture in the early Neolithic generates a new political potential: the formation of households bound not just (or even primarily) by kinship, but by shared commitment to a structure. When this institutional 'unit' is converted to an economic one in the later Neolithic, with daily practice and resource storage increasingly drawn into houses, the seed of the modern world as posited by neoliberal economics—a society founded on the autonomous, competitive activities of individuals or households—was planted (Bogaard, Fochesato and Bowles 2019; Flannery 2002). From here, we can trace episodic, organic growth of wealth disparity, specialization, and competitive disadvantage between households, perhaps exacerbated by new technologies like cattle farming and the plough that increased competition for land, until society reaches a state of systematic hierarchy with Bronze Age palaces, 'mounted warrior elites', and the precursors of state/class societies (Kohler et al. 2017). Although there might be

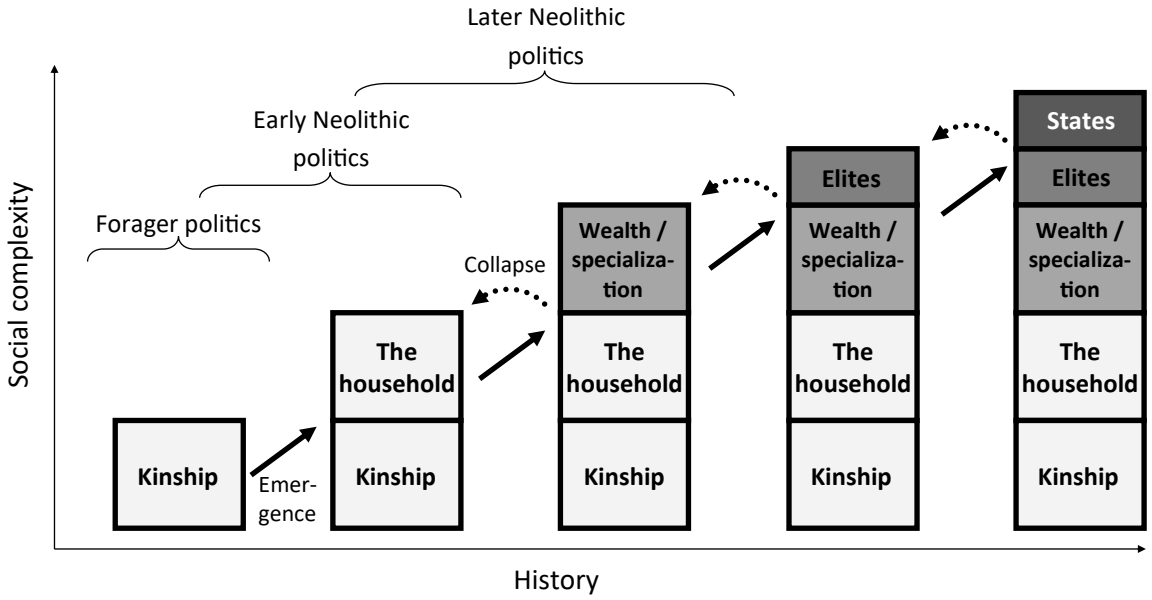


Figure 2.3. 'The emergence of social complexity': a tacit linear model of Neolithic history.

periods of 'collapse' or 'simplification' along the way (Rollefson and Köhler-Rollefson 1993; Simmons 2002), ultimately the narrative sketched by too many of our Neolithic thresholds is a linear march toward ourselves (Gamble 2007).

This did not have to be the case, and does not have to be the way we study Neolithic houses. When researchers have stepped back from the study of origins and thresholds to dig into the rich sociality of specific Neolithic regions and sites in their own terms, surprising, unintuitive and vibrant pictures have sometimes emerged. What is a person, or a place, in a world where skulls were retrieved from graves, refleshed with plaster, circulated and redeposited (Kuijt 2008; Meskell 2008)? Can people embrace the ambiguous boundary between a house and the people who live in it—or even treat buildings themselves as living beings (Fagan 2017; Kuijt 2018; Tringham 2000)? Why did history-making look different in different regions, with extremely long-lived superimposed building sequences in Anatolia, especially detailed decoration of skulls and sculptures of faces in parts of the Levant, or the construction of hilltop monuments and settlement-edge towers in specific regions (e.g. Hodder 2018; Hodder and Meskell 2011)?

We can understand Neolithic histories better by understanding the specific kinds of possibility that opened up as communities, persons, meaningful places and impactful practices stitched together Neolithic worlds. This means resisting the urge to focus attention on those aspects of Neolithic society that seem most intuitive, familiar, and comparable to any other place and time, and unpacking those aspects that seem counterintuitive to us yet fitting in Neolithic places (Hodder 2012; Kay in prep.). It invites us to follow particular

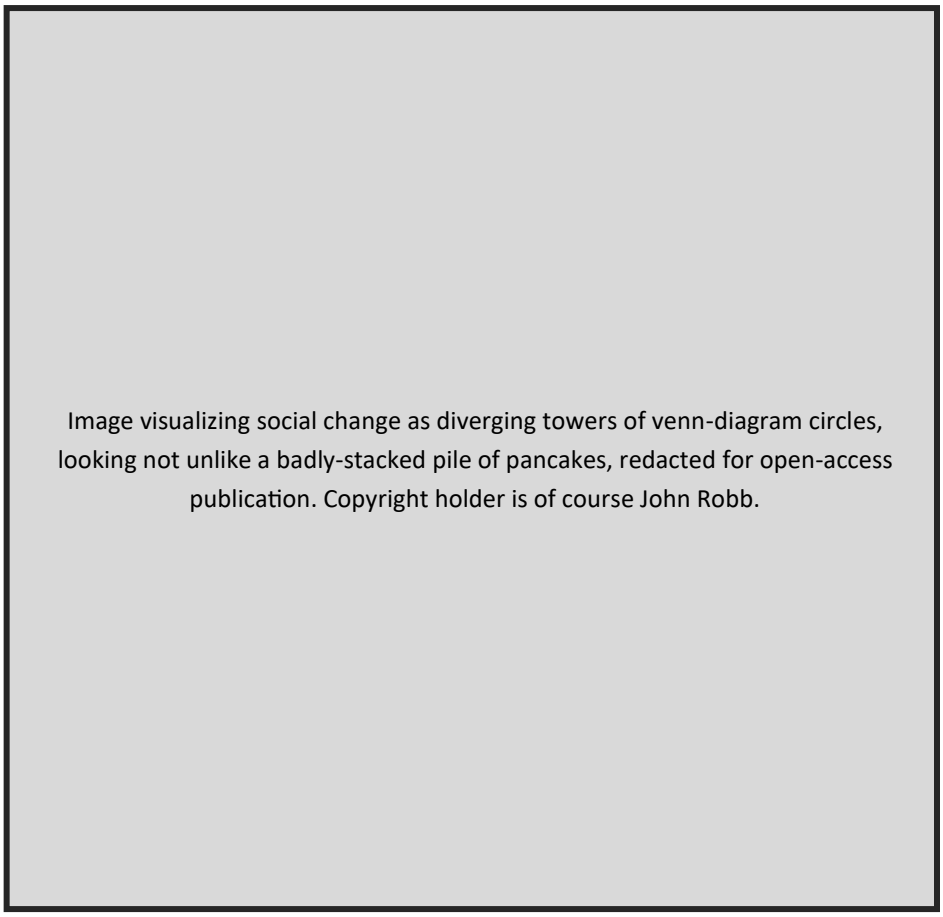


Figure 2.4. Political possibility and historically-specific trajectories: an alternative model for Neolithic transformations. From Robb 2007, fig.58.

trajectories and entanglements through time, working between spaces and scales but never boxing up vital processes (whether houses, sites, or whole periods) as stable and known entities. Figure 2.4, which I have taken from Robb (2007, fig.58), shows an alternative way of thinking about Neolithic historical trajectories (here focused on Italy and Malta in the 5th-4th millennia). Any place and time has a range of political possibilities, defining a range of possible futures. And these futures can tend in a direction without moving along a unilinear path to the present; they can diverge, converge, interact, take 'paths less taken' (Robb 2007) and come to events and turning points specific to their own circumstances (Beck et al. 2007). Developing a richer understanding of the ways communities formed and drove change in specific pasts is a first step toward this kind of richer Neolithic history. It is on this note that I turn to the site at Çatalhöyük and the particular historical trajectory of Central Anatolia through the 7th millennium.

2.4 Politics and architecture at Çatalhöyük

What changed in the 7th millennium, causing people to move around in new ways and causing the Neolithic to expand as it had not done before? Çatalhöyük's 1150-year history

sits at the edge, spatially and temporally, of two different trajectories for settled life. Its communities were actively involved in these changes, as they worked out a future for themselves and their 7th millennium world. By following the politics of architecture at Çatalhöyük, we can grasp some of the dynamics and concerns that drew their lives together and configured communities that set the Neolithic in motion.

In this section I will introduce Çatalhöyük, with special focus on its social structure and the politics of houses. After considering the local history that preceded the site and the history of excavation there, I will follow the way the tell emerged through changing architectural practice over 1150 years and the theories that have been advanced about the kinds of communities that drove that architectural practice. Rather than converging, different studies have come to substantially different understandings of Çatalhöyük's politics. In concluding, I will suggest that this is in part because of a problematic working assumption that houses can stand in, analytically, for discrete groups of people—a challenge that I take up in the next chapter in developing a material political working method for investigating Çatalhöyük houses.

2.4.1 The Neolithic in central Anatolia, 9th– 8th millennia BCE

In the 9th millennium, small foraging, hunting and fishing communities began to settle in permanent villages in Cappadocia and the Konya Plain (Baird 2005); they began to integrate cereal and pulse cultivation into the taskscape (Baird et al. 2018), and began managing wild caprid herds (Buitenhuis 1997; Middleton 2018; Pearson et al. 2007). The best excavated examples of these villages are Boncuklu Höyük, in the mosaic wetland centred on the Çarşamba River near modern Konya (Baird, Fairbairn and Martin 2017; Baird et al. 2018), and the earliest levels at Aşıklı Höyük in the Cappadocian highlands (Özbaşaran 2011). In both regions, sites consisted of small oval buildings with ample open space between.

In the late 9th millennium, settlement in Cappadocia nucleated at Aşıklı Höyük (Esin et al. 1991; Esin and Harmankaya 1999; Özbaşaran 2011; Özbaşaran, Duru and Stiner 2018), which adopted a radically dense form of settlement unique to the region. At Aşıklı Höyük people began building warren-like clusters of small rooms, forming what Düring (2006) calls clustered neighbourhoods (Figure 2.5). As later at Çatalhöyük, the rooftops of Aşıklı Höyük served as thoroughfares, and people accessed rooms by ladder. Hearths are only present in some rooms at Aşıklı, and tend to cluster in particular parts of each neighbourhood rather than being evenly dispersed; this suggests that clustered neighbourhoods had a strong communal aspect, where daily cooking and eating occurred in core areas in each cluster (Cutting 2006; Düring 2006). Intramural burials are common and predominantly located in

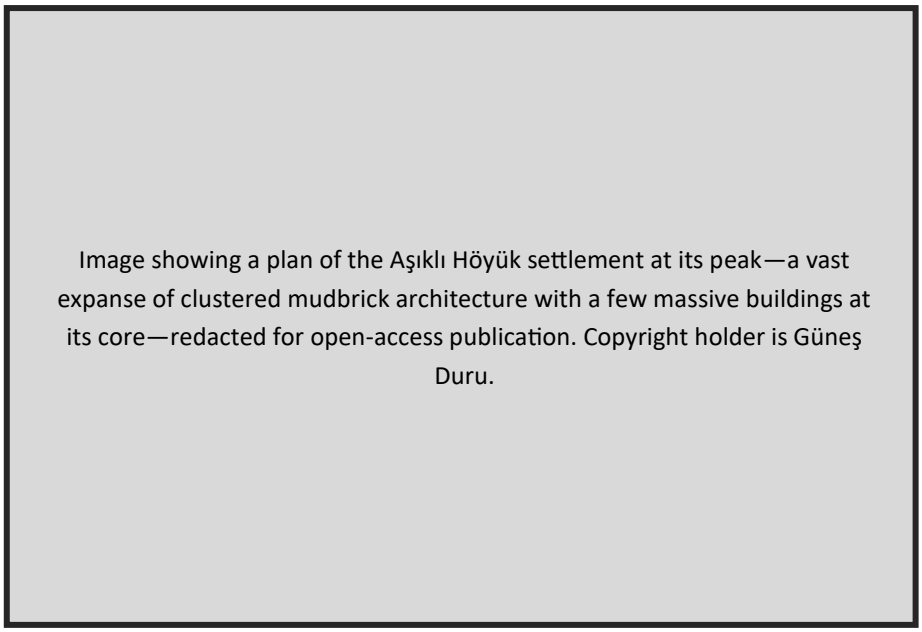


Figure 2.5. Plan of Level 2C at Aşıklı Höyük, Cappadocia, in the early 8th millennium, showing densely clustered structures. Plan by Güneş Duru, in Özbaşaran 2011, fig.2.

rooms with hearths (Esin et al. 1991, 130), further reinforcing the sense of central areas within the clusters. The spatial plan of the settlement was stabilized over very long spans of time, especially from the late 9th millennium until the site's dispersal in ca. 7400 BCE (Thissen 2002). Not only were rooms periodically demolished and rebuilt with the same layout, but features like hearths and ridges were repeated in the exact same location over hundreds of years (Duru 2003; Esin and Harmankaya 1999; Özbaşaran 2011).

The tendency for people living in scattered settlements to nucleate and form large clustered neighbourhood settlements occurred repeatedly during the 9th–7th millennia in Central Anatolia (Figure 2.6). Interestingly, this did not occur simultaneously in each part of the region, but rather nucleated settlements formed and dissolved at various times. After Aşıklı, the clustered neighbourhood settlement at Can Hasan III, on the Karaman Plain east of Çatalhöyük, formed in the mid-8th millennium (French et al. 1972; Thissen 2002). Çatalhöyük was the last of the three known clustered neighbourhood settlements to form, several centuries after Aşıklı's abandonment (Bayliss et al. 2015).

Throughout the 9th–8th millennia, while Aşıklı was at its peak and Can Hasan was forming, settlement in the Çarşamba alluvial fan consisted of smaller settlements scattered around the wetlands. Excavations at Boncuklu Höyük suggest something of the nature of these early villages. Occupied year-round, the inhabitants of Boncuklu made extensive use of wild resources, while equally gardening and herding or managing small numbers of caprids (Baird et al. 2018; Middleton 2018). The structures at Boncuklu are semisubterranean ovoid buildings scattered around a central open space (Figure 2.7). The central space contains

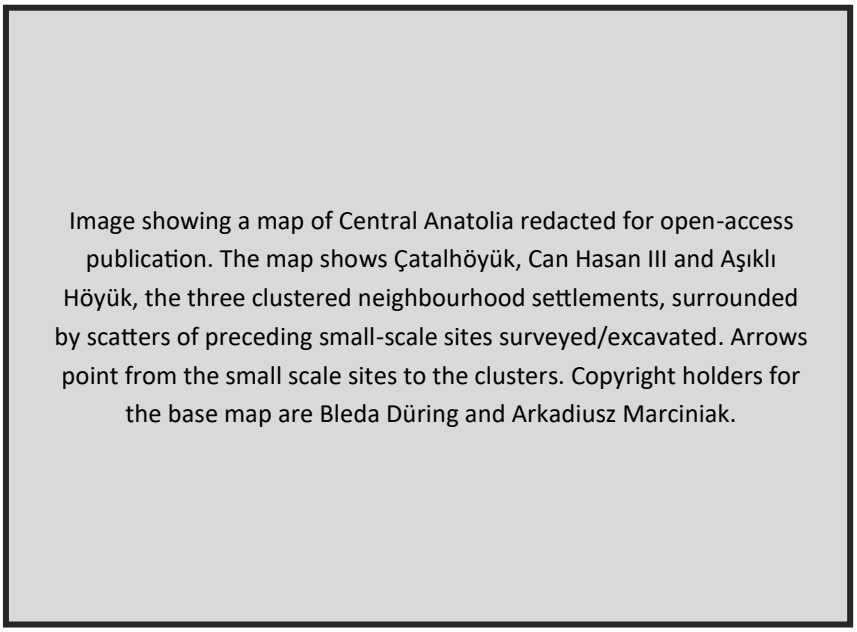


Figure 2.6. The nucleation of settlement around Aşıklı, Can Hasan and Çatalhöyük. Based on survey data from Baird (2005) and Duru and Kayacan (2018) and dates from Thissen (2002), Baird, Fairbairn and Martin (2016) and Özbaşaran 2011. Base map: Düring and Marciniak 2006, fig.1.

traces of a large but lightly-constructed structure, as well as many fireplaces and buried deposits of feasting remains, primary human burials and caches of human cranial elements (Baird, Fairbairn and Martin 2017). Houses were plastered repeatedly, and likely occupied for 10-25 years each based on the convergence of plaster counts with radiocarbon estimates. Houses were often torn down and rebuilt on the same location, despite the abundant open space in the settlement. Their interiors were divided into white-plastered 'clean' areas near the door entrance and hearth areas in the deeper half of the house. The demarcation between these two halves was often marked with a ridge, and sometimes with paint, wooden features or animal elements (e.g. horns) affixed to the wall. Such installations tended to be short-lived, perhaps on the scale of one to two years based on plaster layer counts, and many houses reflect the addition and removal or plastering-over of decorative elements in different locations over the course of their lives. Some of the dead were interred below the clean halves of houses, although too few to represent the total population; bodies were also occasionally retrieved, leaving residual elements and sometimes animal-bone 'replacements' (cf. Baird, Fairbairn and Martin 2017). It is thus likely that multiple funerary pathways existed, only some of which resulted in interment in houses. Practices developed at Boncuklu, including the superimposition of buildings, intramural burial, cranium curation, floor plastering with distinct segments and the use of shifting decorative installations to distinguish space clearly continued into the 7th millennium at Çatalhöyük.

The context of Çatalhöyük's earliest levels can thus be understood in its broad outlines. The

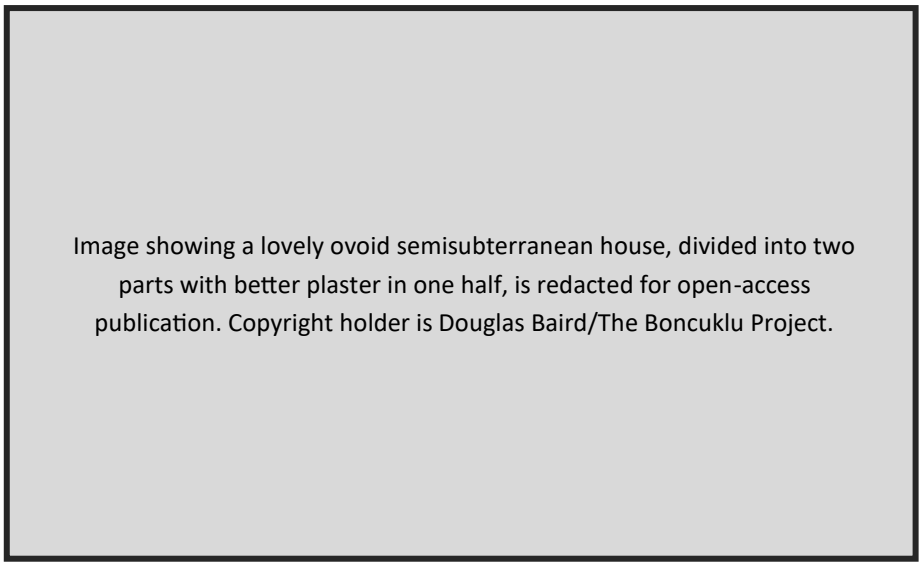


Figure 2.7. Domestic spaces at Boncuklu Höyük. Building 6, with hearth and entry area (foreground) and fine-plastered 'clean' area (background). Baird, Fairbairn and Martin 2017, fig.2.

concept of a clustered neighbourhood settlement had been well-established in the region for centuries, and at least one such settlement existed a few days' walk east at Can Hasan III. In the Çarşamba wetlands, a network of small communities persisted for several centuries (Baird 2005). At the end of the 8th millennium, for reasons that are poorly understood, people in these communities moved to Çatalhöyük (perhaps with some newcomers from elsewhere). Practices such as building superimposition and the interment of the dead below house floors were widespread, in some form or another, throughout the broader Middle Eastern world, and had pedigrees spanning millennia (Hodder 2018). However, local habitus and understandings, many of them evident at Boncuklu, would shape the particularities of Çatalhöyük's built environment and the outlines of its early communities.

2.4.2 Excavating Çatalhöyük

Çatalhöyük has been excavated by three major research projects: the first from 1960–1965 under James Mellaart; the second from 1993–2017 under Ian Hodder; and from 2018 under Çiler Çilingiroğlu. These projects have investigated the site through a wide range of methods, producing an expansive archaeological record. To date, findings from the first two projects have been published in 12 monograph site reports (with five more currently under production), one thematic volume on multievidential research and four on religion (one more under production), and several hundred journal articles and graduate theses. The scale of the datasets and the range of methods and perspectives brought to bear on this single site have little parallel in prehistoric archaeology to date.

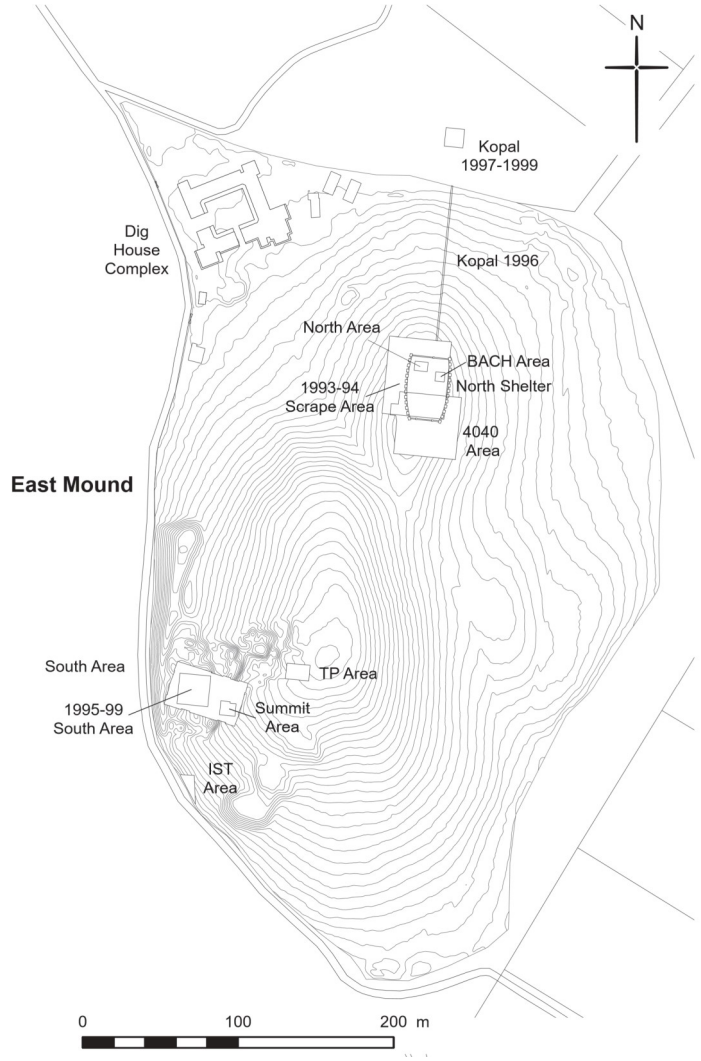


Figure 2.8. Excavation areas of the Hodder project at Çatalhöyük East. Detail of Hodder and Farid 2013, fig.1.4. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

The Mellaart excavations established the physical structure of the tell and built a chronological framework that has been adapted by the later projects (Farid 2013b; Mellaart 1967). Mellaart sorted the site's buildings into 'shrines' and 'houses' based on buildings' degree of visual elaborateness, although he acknowledged that every excavated building was equipped for at least intermittent domestic use and that some degree of ambiguity existed between these categories (Mellaart 1967). His interpretation rested on the idea that he had happened to excavate a 'priestly quarter', where ritual specialists lived near to, and sometimes within, shrines characterized by the display of animal remains, production of paintings and burial of the dead. Thus, the overall picture Mellaart painted was of a nascent complex polity on the model of later Middle Eastern city-states, with a clear religious elite and a temple-like orientation through religious ideology.

The Hodder excavations resumed study of the site from 1993 to 2017. Equipped with

Temporal groupings of levels	Mellaart Levels (approximate correspondences)	South	North	Cal BCE
Final	II, I, 0	TP.O-R and TPC Trenches 1 and 2 (B109 and 115)		6300-5950
Late	V, IV, III	GDN	North.H,I,J and IST	6500-6300
		South.T. TP.N. TPC B110 and B150		
		South.S. TP.M. TPC B150 and B122		
		South.R		
		South.Q		
		South.P		
Middle	VII, VIB, VIA	South.O	North.F, G	6700-6500
		South.N		
		South.M		
Early	XII, XI, X, IX, VIII	South.L		7100-6700
		South.K		
		South.J		
		South.I		
		South.H		
		South.G		

Table 2.1. The overall relative chronology at Çatalhöyük with approximate absolute date equivalencies, as of 2018. Courtesy Çatalhöyük Research Project. The initial close equivalency of Hodder and Mellaart level systems has been complicated by recent stratigraphic re-examination, and so equivalencies given here are approximate and coarse: see discussion in Farid 2013b, 93-7.

detailed single-context excavation methods, on-site laboratories and a commitment to multivocality that engaged excavators, specialists, and area residents in the interpretive process from 'the trowel's edge' onward (Hodder 2000), these excavations promised to push the limits of prehistoric archaeology and produce a much more detailed picture of Neolithic life than had been attempted previously. Over 25 years, five major excavation areas were opened on the site (Figure 2.8). The two areas central to this thesis are the South and North areas. The South area worked along the edge of Mellaart's trenches on the southwest slope of Çatalhöyük East, producing a narrow but deep sequence of excavated structures and spaces from the natural sediments below the mound to the later 7th millennium levels near its top. The North area excavated a broad neighbourhood of houses dating to the peak of the site's occupation, but to a limited depth. Other excavation areas included the work of a

Poznan University team (Areas TP & TPC), who excavated structures dating to the final centuries of the Çatalhöyük East settlement at the turn of the 6th millennium (Marciniak, Filipowicz and Mickel 2011; Marciniak et al. 2015b); Gdansk University excavations (Area GDN) which re-opened Mellaart's trenches, reassessing architectural practice in the late 7th millennium (Barański et al. 2014); and a SUNY Buffalo team which excavated several 6th millennium structures on the later West mound (Orton et al. 2018). Additional soundings, geophysics and survey work have supplemented the major excavation areas with information about other parts of the tell and its surroundings. Careful stratigraphic work has established a fine-grained relative chronology of the site (Farid 2013b), and a major Bayesian modelling programme is nearing completion (Bayliss et al. 2015; forthcoming; Marciniak et al. 2015a) which will make exceptionally precise absolute dates for the foundation and closure of many key structures available in coming years. These excavations, integrated within a single recording protocol and rooted in premises of open data sharing and multivocality, have produced a record of Çatalhöyük little matched by any other prehistoric site in terms of breadth, detail and accessibility.

2.4.3 A rising world: architecture through the levels of the tell

The earliest houses at Çatalhöyük have not been excavated. The earliest excavated layers, located at the bottom of the South Area trenches and dated to the 71st century BCE (Bayliss et al. 2015), are thick midden-like deposits suggestive of site-edge activities (Cessford 2005d; Portillo et al. 2019; Roberts, Boyer and Merrick 2005). The earliest dwellings likely sit deep below the summit of the mound, east-northeast of the South Area. Our architectural image of the site picks up during a period of expansion out from this core (Figure 2.9).

As the population of the mound grew, people made space for burgeoning life in particular ways (Cutting 2005). Rather than spawning off new villages in adjacent areas, building larger homes or emigrating to unfarmed lands west of the site, a particular pattern of growth persisted. New mudbrick buildings were built beyond the edge of the previously built-up area, often leaving a few metre's gap between new and existing structures. These gaps continued to be used as penning and activity areas until they too were filled in with architecture (Portillo et al. 2019). By the mid-7th millennium, much of the site was an uninterrupted expanse of architecture, with very few, small open spaces scattered about. Houses were not arranged at random: as the settlement filled in they formed distinct rows radiating out from the centre of the mound, and in some neighbourhoods buildings seem to form large clusters separated by thin strips of open space. The extent to which these lines were laid out from the outset of the site's expansion or 'evened out' after the fact is unclear.

Figure 2.9. The South Area excavations in an imaginative context, showing the expansion of Çatalhöyük in the early 7th millennium.

However, the existence of large-scale spatial patterns involving many houses has suggested to many authors that some form of institution larger than the household was involved in the construction process in the early centuries of the 7th millennium (Bogaard 2017; Düring 2006; Kuijt 2018).

Buildings' interiors varied, but all had some form of tripartite rectangular plan (Figure 2.10).

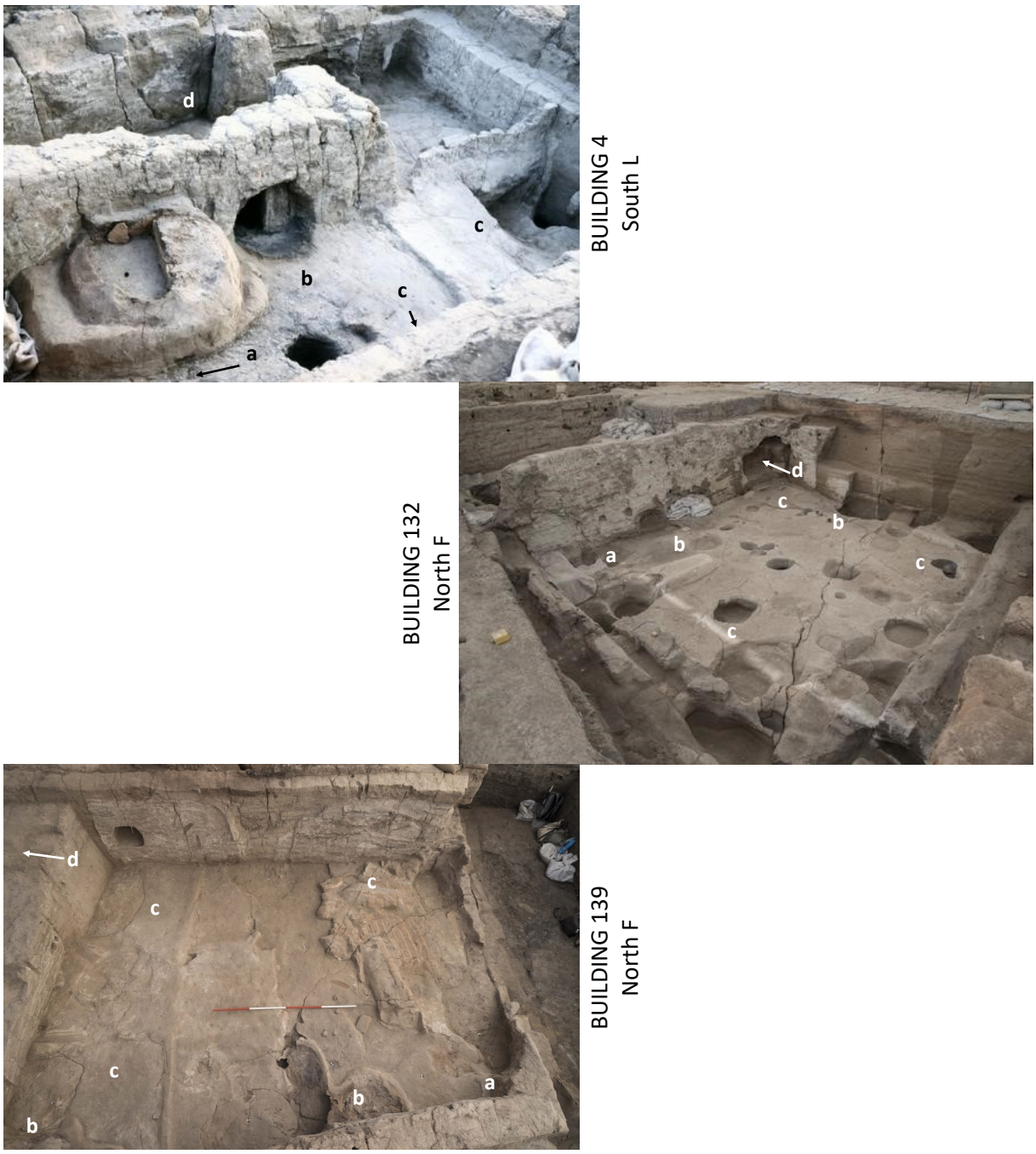


Figure 2.10. Three house interiors from the early-mid 7th millennium at Çatalhöyük. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project). Annotations: (a) ladder entry; (b) fire installations; (c) raised platforms; (d) side spaces.

Most space in each building was devoted to an open-plan main room divided into small (ca. 2m^2) segments by ridges and steps. These would include 'dirty' areas (containing domed ovens, open hearths, and the ladder entry), and 'clean' areas (comprising a series of differently-elevated platforms, and sometimes ornamented with paintings or sculptural elements). Finally, most buildings had small annexes or side spaces, often dark, narrow rooms alongside the main room accessed through small crawlholes. Although the precise arrangement of these three kinds of space and the specific ways they were furnished varied

meaningfully, their broad regularity suggests a distinctive habitus and way of arranging practice and movement within Çatalhöyük houses (Hodder and Cessford 2004).

The elephant above these rooms is the roofscape. The few large fragments of rooftop spaces recovered from building rubble show clearly that rooftops were plastered just like house interiors; were often partially covered; and had activity areas and furnishings on them (Matthews 2012). They likely served as living spaces in good weather, in addition to their role as thoroughfares. However, the Konya Plain, a high-altitude steppe, has a volatile climate, with hot dry summers punctuated by occasional violent storms, blustery winters with sporadic major snowfall, and cold, wet springs. Climatic reconstructions vary on whether the local climate warmed (Wainright and Ayala 2019) or cooled (Roffet-Salque et al. 2018) during the 7th millennium, and it is possible that regional precipitation increased (Charles et al. 2014, 71) even as the ground around the site grew dryer (Ayala et al. 2017). In any case, use of rooftops was likely flexible throughout the 7th millennium, and residents had to be prepared to move activities indoors at short notice in all seasons (especially winter and spring). Other information about rooftops has to be inferred from the form and construction of the ground levels of houses, leading to a cursory understanding. In the early years at Çatalhöyük, many buildings stood freely at the edge of the settlement, yet lacked ground-level doors. Entering them would have required descending to the ground, crossing open space, then climbing to rooftop level before descending into the destination structure. By contrast, in the main architectural bulk of the site, especially once most open spaces had been filled in, the roofscape provided a more or less continuous surface for movement, albeit one subject to constant surveillance and control by people working in/atop houses (Düring 2001). Only in the later 7th millennium do ground-level portals appear with any regularity, stitching buildings together with external spaces in new ways. The thorough demolition of roof remains in the vast majority of Çatalhöyük houses is a major caveat for any study of Çatalhöyük living space (including this one): we effectively interpret these houses from their lower halves.

Despite this conspicuous absence, Çatalhöyük houses' interiors are rich evidence for life in 7th millennium domestic space, even if they were more intensively used in winter and poor weather than in fair weather. In addition to daily practices such as storing and cooking food, sleeping, and producing craft items, people steadily reshaped houses through maintenance and modification work. Buildings' interiors were plastered with white marl clays hundreds of times over the course of their lives, likely representing major annual plastering and thinner seasonal washes (Matthews 2005a, 2005b). Plastering an entire house may have taken a small workforce many days, and thus was more likely something that invited substantial numbers of people to collaborate in (i.e., people from more than one household)

(St. George 2012; Stevanović 2012a). More occasional maintenance work included instances where unstable walls were knocked out and repaired, or shored up with retaining walls (Stevanović 2012a). Broadly ritual activities further reshaped houses physically and informed their social roles. These include the production of intricate wall paintings (which would have been visible for a short time until the next plastering event covered them); the burial of the dead below floors (usually 'clean' platforms); and the installation of sculptural features on walls or on pillars jutting out of the floors and platforms (often bearing animal horns or skulls, or representing animals)(Hodder and Meskell 2011; Meskell 2008; Russell and Meece 2005; Twiss 2012) .

After periods of maintenance, modification, and inhabitation, Çatalhöyük buildings in the early-mid 7th millennium were deliberately demolished, usually with some sort of aggregation of artefacts deposited on the final floors (Russell et al. 2014). Buildings' life-spans likely varied substantially, but the average in this earlier period seems to have been roughly 50-80 years (Cessford 2005a; see my note on absolute chronology at §3.4.3), or somewhat longer than the adult lifespan of most Çatalhöyük people. At closure, wooden posts lining the walls were removed, and the roof and upper courses of the walls imploded into the structure and compacted, leaving a stub up to about 2m high of the original walls. Typically, early-mid 7th millennium buildings were rebuilt shortly after demolition, using the stubs of the older building's walls as foundations for new ones and often replicating aspects of the former building's layout and decoration (but see discussion of continuity, §6.4.1).

Çatalhöyük houses grew more elaborate through the early centuries of the site's occupation, containing more sculptural elements and paintings (Hodder and Pels 2010), possibly more intramural burials (Düring 2003), and a greater range of specialized material culture such as ornate beadwork (Bains et al. 2013). A wide variety of changes are related to the period of peak size and density, around the 66th century (Hodder 2012; 2014a). In a short period of time, the site's cuisine shifted from a bread-based to porridge-based diet (González Carretero 2020; González Carretero,Wollstonecroft and Fuller 2017), supported by the shift from locally-made, poor quality ceramics to the use of imported cooking pots with volcanic mineral temper (Doherty and Tarkan 2013). People sourced obsidian from different outcrops in Cappadocia, 200km east (Carter and Milić 2013). They stopped going further and further into the surrounding wetland to quarry clays for construction, and instead began using colluvium formed through the erosion of the tell itself for mudbrick (Hodder and Doherty 2014). Perhaps most dramatically, during this peak period people began to close buildings with fire (Brami 2017; Taylor et al. 2015; Twiss et al. 2008), suggesting very conspicuous performance of houses' social role and creating excellent preservation in many mid-7th millennium buildings.

Hodder (2014c; Hodder and Pels 2010) has linked this fluorescence to the emergence of institutions called 'history houses'. As households' identities were anchored in the reconstruction of architecture and ritual practices in the exact same place, he argues that houses competed to establish themselves as central to the history-making work of larger communities:

> *the household that animated a building and turned it into an individual 'house' consisted of several generations of nuclear families, with or without adoptive kin, where authority was divided among different elders of both genders . . . Elders supervised and safeguarded the transmission of relevant socioeconomic skills . . . and some of them were more skilled at or renowned for this than others and were sought out by a much larger number of people from other households – and acquired more authority and power as a result . . . . A successful house transferred such guardianship capacities to another guardian in the next generation . . . thus increasing the need for a house to be rebuilt in the same way*
>
> (Hodder and Pels 2010, 183).

Although this is only one model of Çatalhöyük's institutional structure (see below), the history house hypothesis is powerful for tying the spatiality of practice in the mid-7th millennium to the aspirations and dynamics of communities in previous centuries. A history house, by definition, was not built in a day; the elaborate houses of the mid-7th millennium were the result of a centuries-long trajectory toward more concentrated meanings attached to specific places. According to this model, at the site's apogee there may have been a political 'mosaic' of partially-institutionalized affiliations between structures, all anchored in history-making performances and displays centring specific households (Hodder 2014c).

By 6500 BCE, Çatalhöyük loomed more than ten metres above the surrounding wetlands. People and material from throughout the region seemed to gravitate toward this one point in the landscape. Whether through competitive history-making or otherwise, the upward momentum had been sustained for half a millennium. This long-lived form of space-making, however, would transform dramatically in the centuries that followed. In the second half of the second millennium, the town's rise slowed, and its neighbourhoods hollowed out. Buildings were abandoned or rebuilt as small portions of their former size, and large outdoor yards replaced stretches of uninterrupted architecture. The process may have been fairly rapid: both the North and South areas reveal areas where numerous long-lived building sequences were converted to midden (Figure 2.11). By 6200 or so, it is likely that substantial parts of the mound were uninhabited, and by the 60th century, inhabitation on the main mound ceased, shifting instead to the 6th millennium West Mound on the far side of the Çarşamba River (Marciniak et al. 2015a; Orton et al. 2018).

This did not, however, spell the end of 'classic' Çatalhöyük spatiality, including the use of

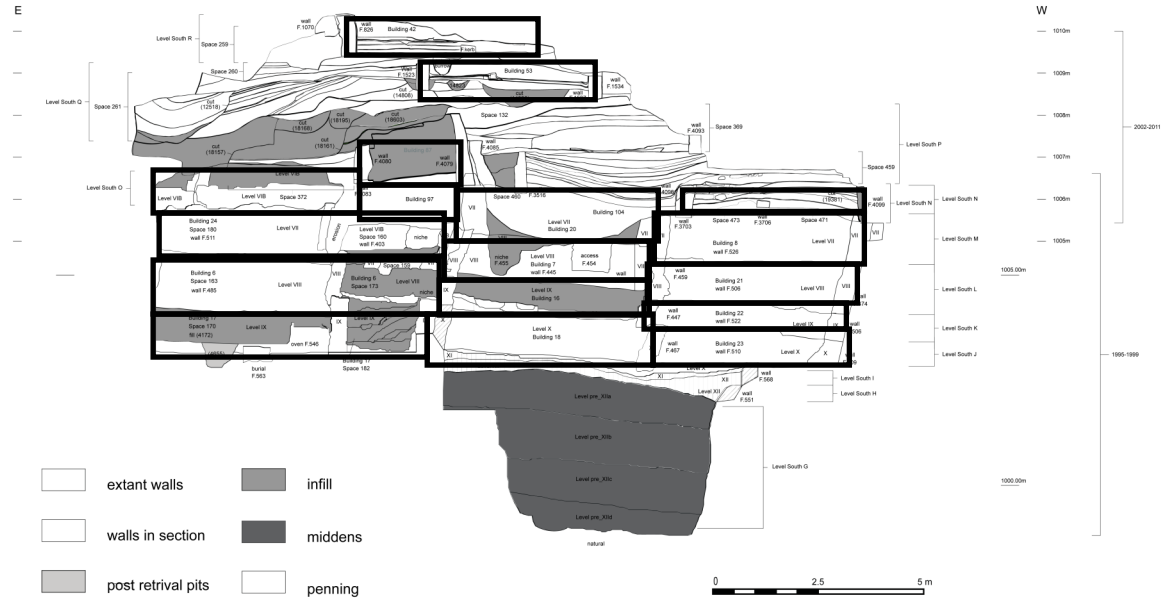


Figure 2.11. Composite section through the South Area excavations, with buildings outlined. Note the spread of midden layers atop the remains of mid-7th millennium houses, with more shifting and free-standing architecture above. Modified; base image used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

superimposed architecture. Rather, in the later levels of the site, superimposed stacks of buildings continued within a different spatial, material and social context. Around sequences of up to four superimposed buildings, other structures appear on more shifting bases, often with parts of the settlement alternating between built and open-space usage through time. The architectural diversity of the later levels at Çatalhöyük seems to increase, with some small free-standing buildings of apparently nondomestic function (Yeomans 2013b), some one-room buildings with central hearths (e.g. House 2013c), and some structures that appear more similar to older forms. Doorways appear more commonly, and some appear to have been opened or closed during buildings' use lives, suggesting increasing integration of outdoor spaces into interior working rhythms and shifting movement patterns. Outdoor spaces themselves become more managed, with regular spreads of well-made clay surfaces, the appearance of hearths and outdoor ovens, and light spreads of lime perhaps to sanitize these areas (Shillito and Ryan 2013). The latest Neolithic buildings excavated at Çatalhöyük comprise small roofed structures with large attached, walled courtyards, some of them containing separate structures for burial practice (Marciniak 2019; Marciniak et al. 2015a): a substantial departure from the mass of structures with a vast range of functions in previous centuries. A variety of environmental data from these houses suggests that they were also inhabited by communities that made use of the landscape in a more restricted, less labour-intensive way (Marciniak et al. 2015b).

2.4.4 Building autonomy, living dependently: contradictory currents in Çatalhöyük politics

The buildings at Çatalhöyük and their changing articulation over the course of the 7th millennium have been studied extensively as evidence of the changing social structure of the settlement. Often the focus has been to understand the kinds of institutions that existed at various points in the town's history, and the way these may have brought about the changes that we see in the site as a whole through time. Building on the three broad approaches to Neolithic houses more broadly that I outlined above (houses as institutions; houses as economic units; houses as entangled material), analysis has converged on some basic premises. From there, a range of models for Çatalhöyük's social structure have been proposed.

Both in terms of economics and the performance of identity, Çatalhöyük houses give rich material for established social archaeological approaches. Buildings integrated intimate daily tasks such as cooking and eating, economic staples like storage and craft production, and highly conspicuous performances and displays like burials and animal horn sculptures. Buildings rarely share party walls, and appear to have been built and demolished individually rather than as part of more expansive construction projects. All of this has been enough for most studies of the site to concur that the household was the primary institution and fundamental organizing principle for communities at the site (Asouti 2005; Bogaard et al. 2009; Demirergi et al. 2014; Hodder and Cessford 2004).

Looking at many materials on a house-by-house basis, patterns emerge that are suggestive of broad autonomy of different houses. Tung (2013c) and Love (2013) have studied building materials from a social perspective, considering the way bricks and mortars were sourced, produced and laid. Each building demonstrates use of different clay sources and different techniques, suggesting that the practicalities of construction were worked out on a building-by-building basis. Once built, every house contained a kitchen area for food preparation, side areas and/or bins for storage, clean-floored areas that would have suited sleeping or sitting, and in overview this can appear as if each building was self-sufficient (but see below). Structures' raised platform areas suggest each may have slept between four and six people on average, or one and eleven at the extremes (Düring 2007, 165). The average house's storage space—whether calculated through plaster bins' capacity or the size of side spaces (assuming some food and goods were stored in baskets or bags)—appears somewhat smaller than ethnoarchaeological measurements from 'traditional' Middle Eastern farms, but consistent on average with a small family's annual needs plus a 'normal surplus' for planting (Bogaard et al. 2009; Twiss 2012). There is, however, substantial variation in buildings'

storage capacities as well. Some houses, especially in the mid-7th millennium, show special concentrations of evidence for groundstone tool manufacture (Wright 2014), beadmaking (Bains et al. 2013) , and possibly woodworking (see Chapter 4), suggesting some specialization of specific houses or people in the site's economy.

Other aspects of houses are more unevenly distributed, especially at the site's peak. While most houses contain several burials, some have exceptionally many – up to roughly 60 in a single house (Boz and Hager 2013). Most houses contain some traces of painting, but a few buildings are especially rich in terms of painted area, frequency, or intricacy. Buildings were elaborated with sculptural elements affixed to walls or set atop clay or wooden pillars, and these often incorporate large faunal remains such as horns and mandibles related to feasting activities involving up to several hundred people (Demirergi et al. 2014; Twiss 2012). Well-preserved sculptural installations are concentrated in a few houses (Kuijt 2018; Twiss 2012). However, excavators often uncover truncation cuts along walls or platform edges where such features may have stood, and if these are included in the data (as they are in this thesis) they appear more common, albeit with some houses more sculpturally elaborate than others. Moving beyond simple quantities, Çatalhöyük buildings often display clear instances of remembering and citing long-past creative action: burials made perhaps decades apart with resonant grave goods; repeated deposition of the same kinds of figurines around the same hearth, or the same kind of pot below the same ladder; repetition of painted motifs and locations through superimposed buildings. These suggest that buildings had specific salient histories that may have accumulated and diverged through time (Hodder 2005; Hodder and Pels 2010).

The overall picture that emerges through summarizing methods is thus split. Houses seem to have a baseline domestic functionality that may vary somewhat, but is always present (storing, cooking, sleeping, plastering) and other, more variable roles in burial, display, performance and memory. Archaeologists have found common ground in understanding Çatalhöyük's houses to represent 'a society built of distinct but mutually entangled households . . . with smaller groups interacting more frequently than larger ones, and the entire site socializing together rarely' (Demirergi et al. 2014, 108). However, from this baseline understanding, efforts to make sense of the range of larger institutions that may have bound households together for practices like burial or feasting have diverged. Many authors understand groups larger than the household to be informal and situational, perhaps focused on particular individuals with certain skills or memories (Demirergi et al. 2014; Wright 2014). Others draw polygons around small or large sets of buildings on the settlement plan, defining clusters that they argue worked together as compounds, corporate groups, or Houses (Düring 2006; Kuijt 2018). Buildings might stand out in such clusters

							Düring Criter.	Hodder Criteria			Kuijt Criteria	
Building	**Total area (m^2)**	**Max no. side rooms**	**Max side room area**	**Burials (MNI)**	**Sculptural elements**	**Painted wall segments**	**'Steps' from nearest midden**	**'Elaboration Index' >15**	**Burial MNI >5**	**Superimposed Rebuilds >2**	**Burial MNI>10**	**Sculptures >2**
1	38.0	4	13	61	5	5	1	x	x	?	x	x
3	27.5	1	6.3	8	1	5	3	x	x			
49	15.1	1	2.3	15	2	5	2		x	?	x	
52	44.7	5	8.5	18	3	1	1	x	x	?	x	x
59	50.1	3	29.5	1	4	1	1	x		x		x
77	28.2	1	7.9	37	5	3	1	x	x		x	x
114	18.8	2	N/A	16	1	3	2		x		x	
131	46.6	2	15.7	42	2	6	1	x	x	x	x	

Table 2.2. A selection of fully-excavated houses from North Area Level G, showing how three different authors' criteria for highlighting 'elaborate' or 'central' houses point to different structures (Hodder 2014c; Kuijt 2018; Düring 2001). Coloured squares at right show buildings that meet the specified criteria.

because of division of labour within the larger corporate group. Still other authors posit non-contiguous networks of houses, linked by ritual sodalities or secret societies (Hayden 2018; Mills 2014; Russell and Meece 2005). Hodder's history house hypothesis begins from the principle of autonomous, competing households and develops to a mid-7th millennium flourish where houses become linked in a mosaic of institutions materialized through different practices, rather than one or two dominant institutions (Hodder 2014b; Hodder and Pels 2010; see §2.4.3).

The problem is that the diverse material distributions archaeologists have relied on in building their interpretations do not resonate very well with one another (Mazzucato 2013), making it hard to arbitrate between different interpretations. As Twiss (2012, 67) puts it, there is 'surprisingly little evidence for socioeconomic interaction between . . . modes of consumption' posited for the site. Houses with a great deal of storage space, for example, do not have any more (or fewer) feasting remains in them, on average (Twiss 2012), nor any other kind of 'elaboration' (Hodder and Pels 2010). Houses with exceptional obsidian assemblages need not contain many bone tools. Even among the kinds of 'ritually elaborate' traits houses might have had, some buildings were lavishly painted, some had many burials, many sculptures, or many special deposits; some had two or three of these in combination, or all of them (Table 2.2).

A greater challenge still arises from new data and perspectives suggesting dynamics in Çatalhöyük society that cannot be captured with a household-centred model at all. Analysis of botanical remains suggests a complex field system of nearby and distant fields scattered in the mosaic wetlands around the tell, with complex seasonal dynamics of cooperation, labour pooling and sharing (Bogaard 2017; Fairbairn et al. 2005). Similarly, herding in the early centuries at Çatalhöyük may have involved large shared herds, with most sheep sharing similar pastureland (Henton 2013; Pearson 2013). Intramural burial has long been an enigma: some structures seem to have accumulated too many burials, too quickly, for these to all represent dead members of a 5-8 person household (Boz and Hager 2013; Carter et al. 2015). Extensive dental morphometric analysis, supported by targeted aDNA study, has reached the surprising conclusion that few people at Çatalhöyük were buried among close genetic relatives (Chyleński et al. 2019; Pilloud 2009; Pilloud and Larsen 2011). The group of people buried in any given structure thus do not seem to represent a biological kin group. People's affiliation with others and with houses, in life and in death, may have been complex, context-specific, and rooted in other factors than physiological descent. To understand households on the model of a family home is surely to miss something key about how people made a place in their world.

Other studies have challenged the apparent stability and self-sufficiency of houses themselves. Marciniak et al. (2015a) demonstrate that, at least in the late 7th millennium, buildings' longevity varied widely: precise radiocarbon estimates suggest that some houses stood for only a few years, while other lasted decades. They suggest that, in that period of substantial change, households may have been considerably unstable, with only some living arrangements lasting for extended periods. Barański et al. (2015) show that houses were not so structurally unified as they are usually portrayed: there is growing evidence that rooms were added on or closed off partway through buildings' occupation, or even reassigned from one to another structure by filling in one crawlhole and opening another. Stevanović (2012a) notes that, although all Çatalhöyük houses contained kitchens and storage areas, some houses seem not to have contained kitchens or storage features *throughout their lives*: a closer look at the stratigraphy reveals periods where some buildings were *not* self-sufficient at all (Kay 2020). The fact that buildings needed to 'lean on' neighbours for key daily functions should not, perhaps, be surprising, given the settlement's layout. A house totally surrounded by its neighbours, requiring one to cross through other living spaces to reach it, seems like a poor bastion of autonomous living. The broader point of all of this is that the communities of people attached to buildings could not have been completely straightforward and fixed. People needed to mix and form relationships that had little to do with biological descent; they needed to make use of facilities in multiple buildings to put food in their bowls; the stability and continuity of the house, though clearly valued, was never a given.

These dynamics are hard to capture in an approach that treats buildings as analytic units representing modular 'units' of people.

Bogaard, Charles and Twiss (2010, 314) have called Çatalhöyük's social structure a 'paradox of division and cohesion.' Some data seem to show us a society of neat, idiosyncratic and self-sufficient households. Others show gradations of symbolic importance or economic prosperity, perhaps linking houses together in corporate groups or setting some apart as more central, powerful and well-off than others. The 'history house' hypothesis posits continuous communities attached to centuries-long building sequences, while other data undercut the idea that houses had fixed communities linked to them in the first place. We will revisit questions of autonomy, interdependency, history, and the scale of communities throughout this thesis, but it is from the final set of studies above that I draw the most inspiration for the present work. If people were not born into relationships, but negotiated them throughout their lives, and if houses did not simply *have* rooms, capacities, qualities, but gained and lost them over time, then there is much more to Çatalhöyük houses than the way they stand in for institutions (whatever those institutions may have been). They become mediums for, and participants in, lives that were fundamentally negotiable. By taking buildings' physical constitution and their involvement in human lives less as analytic priors and more as objects of analysis themselves, the studies above hint at a more dynamic way that Neolithic people steadily reshaped the material world and their places in it.

2.5 Conclusion

The subtitle of this chapter is tongue-in-cheek. People did not enter Çatalhöyük houses across thresholds at all; they descended into them on wooden ladders. As a living arrangement, the choice seems peculiar. It is hard for us to imagine a world without doorways, and harder still to imagine why people at Çatalhöyük established this form of entry *before* the site reached peak density (while many houses could have been reached at ground level). Yet, as unintuitive as they may seem to our minds, the 'vertical thresholds' of Çatalhöyük must have made sense for centuries. People at Çatalhöyük reshaped their world in ways that you or I would never think to do, and their history—the sum outcome of all the change that they effected—followed a course that we can only half-grasp in terms designed with our own politics in mind.

To follow architecture through the levels at Çatalhöyük is to follow trajectories toward different kinds of future. Whether this is the apparently vertical aspirations of people in the early centuries of the tell, who built structures steadily upward with careful attention to

underlying details; the high drama of horned pillars, house burnings and feasts, with whatever rearrangement of attention and social position these aimed to effect; or the more shifting production of places in the later 7th millennium and the apparent emigration of groups away from the site, the core point is this. Social structure in the Neolithic was never about stasis, but an orientation toward changing the world in certain kinds of way.

Household archaeology has won substantial insights into the Neolithic. Whether investigating the origins of economic inequality or tracing specifically Neolithic understandings of history, we have learned a great deal about houses in general, and Neolithic houses in particular, by thinking about the ways they brought people together and gave them shared space, experiences and identities. In the next chapter, I develop a new framework for investigating houses from a material political perspective—and many of the fundamental theoretical insights at the approach's foundations will derive, not from centre-shelf social philosophy but from the study of Neolithic houses in the Middle East and Europe.

However, the way Çatalhöyük houses pull analysis in contradictory directions suggests that our theory of Neolithic houses is pushing against methodological limits. In many studies above the tendency to work as if excavated houses relate to discrete, stable and human-centred institutions (households, Houses, religious sodalities) is all too visible. We have limited ways of working concretely with instability, multiplicity, and the interpenetration of communities and spaces. At the beginning of this chapter, I set three goalposts for a political understanding of the Neolithic: (1) it should follow the specific courses of change that differentiated Neolithic worlds on their own terms, rather than tying Neolithic horizons to the origins of 'modern' social phenomena; (2) it should understand communities as collaborations oriented toward change, rather than as fixed entities; and (3) it should explore the active, constitutive role of materials in collaborative action. While Neolithic archaeology has produced profound insights along all three lines, there is a palpable tension between our best aspirations to construct rich histories, and methods that block houses off, singly or in groups as straightforward units. Simply put, some of our received approaches strip out much of the politics and potentiality that we ought to be looking for in the excavated past. The next chapter sets out to define a new way of working with Neolithic houses that can re-engage us with the dynamics inside them, and lets the material point us in ways that—like Çatalhöyük 'thresholds'—we would never imagine ourselves.

Chapter 3

Prehistoric houses as material politics: concepts and methods

3.1 Introduction

Archaeologists' trench jargon is often humorous, frequently unrepeatable in polite company, and sometimes highly revealing about the ways we think. Of the Çatalhöyük trench jargon that *is* repeatable, two terms, often interchangeable, stand out from my time digging there: 'the Neolithic monkeys', and the ubiquitous 'they'. The former tends to be deployed when too many trowels' edges have stood still for too long as excavators puzzle over something they have uncovered. Why are there articulated human fingers in this wall foundation, surrounded by packing material? What are these two burnt mudbricks doing in an otherwise unburnt platform rim? Eventually, someone will say: the Neolithic monkeys did it. Don't stand there scratching your heads all day, wondering *why*; if the stratigraphy is clear, document it, excavate it, and let's move on. Neolithic monkeys (or if you prefer, goblins, gnomes, or poltergeists) are an adaptive concept for people in the business of taking apart a foreign world layer by layer. They let us defer our confusion to a later time, to keep working in conditions of radical unfamiliarity. As dismissive as the phrase is of Çatalhöyük's residents, the goal is not to write off past people as unintelligible, and perhaps unintelligent, actors. The goal is to continue the digging while we do the hard work of making a connection across nine millennia of difference, understanding that it is through the digging as much as the head scratching that we might make sense of the dead.

Despite being more respectful, I suspect that the word 'they' has a more insidious effect on our thinking as archaeologists when we use it to describe what we see in the field. Why did *they* place these fingers in this foundation? Why did *they* select these bricks, dig this hole, close this oven? By the time we have finished digging all 500+ layers that make up a Çatalhöyük house, we find that *they* guided an immense number of changes in the space. There is a sense of unity of design and action in using 'they' to discuss excavated remains' histories and interconnections. Where 'Neolithic monkeys' tacitly acknowledges our own struggle to make a human connection with people in the past, 'they' inserts a mannequin actor, and invites us to hang interpretations on it like clothing: what kind of a 'they' were they? By simplifying houses' multiplicity, letting 'them' stand in for houses' inhabitants closes off many of the lines of friction, contradictory potentials, and multivalent histories

that made domestic space vibrantly political in the past (cf. Bennett 2010; Mol 2002).

Working between excavated remains, the processes that assembled those materials as we find them and the communities that were oriented through those processes is a fair definition of what archaeologists do (Boissinot 2015). In this sense, all archaeological studies of domestic communities are studies of more-than-human communities engaged in the material world; all archaeologies of politics are about material politics. But, as many others working within the 'new materialism' of recent decades have pointed out (e.g. Boivin 2008; Harris and Cipolla 2017; Lucas 2012; Olsen 2010; Shanks 2007), the conceptual devices that archaeologists have developed tend to smuggle dualisms, Platonic ideals and modern politics into our histories. The idea that excavated houses represent the work of some 'they'—usually a household—is among these.

In this chapter I review the way archaeologists have interpreted houses in relation to communities, outlining the trouble that arises when our thought slips from the physical remains of a house onto a mannequin actor, like a household or family, that the house is supposed to represent (Weismantel 2014). Houses are involved in many more dynamics and communities than the standard concepts in our field are fit to capture. A special challenge for conventional notions of the household is in studying the incessant *change* that we know characterizes domestic life as people and materials join in, pass through, come into being or die, and develop relationships with one another through time (Pels 2010). In a representational approach, where houses stand in for households, such change is difficult to study through archaeological evidence, and is often ignored or 'clothed' with ethnographic models.

A material political approach that anchors politics less exclusively in human beings and centres the layering-on of materials and qualities in space will open up rich new interpretive pathways. The final two sections of this chapter outline the conceptual framework for such an approach and the methods I use in this thesis for following space-making at Çatalhöyük. By working through the many layers of Çatalhöyük houses, we can key into richer politics in them and start to understand how the intersection of more-than-human communities in domestic space oriented the Neolithic world toward change and shaped its horizons.

3.2 A 'slippage': houses as representations of households?

Since the 1980s, prehistoric houses have been studied under the broad banner of household archaeology (Wilk and Rathje 1982). This new turn aimed to supplant older archaeological epistemologies that gave houses and daily life limited and indecorous roles as cultural and

typochronological markers. Instead, archaeologists in both the processual and postprocessual veins of the discipline activated houses as sites of meaningful and materially vital action (e.g. Blanton 1994; Hendon 1996; Hodder 1982; Tringham 1991). The ethnographic concept of the household seemed to give archaeologists a way at 'the people behind the artefact' of the house, or better yet the systems behind both people and houses (Flannery 1967). After all, in many societies outside or on the fringes of state bureaucracies, the household is the most clearly-defined and recognizable political institution. By studying houses as reflections of the nature and activities of households, the ground-level dynamics of larger economies, systems of symbols, gender dynamics, and more could be teased into the foreground.

By the mid-1990s several interpretive pathways had been well established around houses, which remain the basis of productive conversations to this day. These include comparing excavated houses with ethnoarchaeological examples (Blanton 1994; Kuijt 2000; Wilk and Rathje 1982); statistical methods like network analysis and the GINI coefficient aimed at drawing out numerical similarity or difference between houses (Bogaard,Fochesato and Bowles 2019; Mazzucato 2019); access analyses, residues analyses and other spatial methods for tracing activity areas and movement patterns (Cutting 2003; Hillier and Hanson 1984; Hodder and Cessford 2004; Nevett 1999; Rainville 2005); structuralist or symbolic readings of spatial forms and ornamentation as reflections of gender order, belief systems or ritual (Cauvin 2000; Hodder 1990); collaborations with artists, writers, local communities and conservators to reconstruct 'domestic scenes' from prehistory (e.g. Chesson 2012; Fairbairn et al. 2005); and more. The specific working methods and theoretical concerns of these pathways are too diverse to list here. What most share is the premise that the remains of an excavated residence speak first and foremost to the nature of a 'domestic' community—its internal organization and external relations or position in larger social systems.

In this section I consider the way these approaches activate houses as social information. I will follow two strands of thinking, broadly distinguishing pathways focused on households' external or internal relations, and equally on more empiricist working methods and studies open to insights from ethnographic analogy and speculative reconstruction. Although I divide them here, today most household archaeology draws on both kinds of interpretation. However, this convergence does not necessarily confirm the knowledge gained through either pathway—it may simply reflect common underlying suppositions about the nature of communities and material remains that require further scrutiny. I will return to the ethnographic and ethnoarchaeological record to challenge the notion that physical houses can stand in for communities at all, in the ways envisaged by most household archaeology. The subsequent section will take up the challenge, considering how a material political approach can better link physical houses into prehistoric communities and historical changes.

3.2.1 Summarizing and comparing houses as units

If we want to know how past people lived together, a natural first question is: what were their houses like? Were they very large, or very small? One-room structures, or internally divided? Did they contain facilities for a wide range of practices, or were most daily activities undertaken elsewhere? Although simple at face value, the implications of these different qualities can be dramatic when we compare the houses in different regions and periods (e.g. Hofmann and Smyth (Eds) 2013; Kuijt and Goring-Morris 2002). Different forms of sociality are possible among people living in longhouses, clustered mudbrick houses, Greek townhouses, or Victorian terraces. Capturing and comparing the salient differences between different architectural forms is a good start to defining the political force of buildings in a given place and time. It also makes sense to compare populations of houses within sites: are some houses bigger and smaller, more complex or simpler, richer or poorer in this or that artefact type? By asking questions like these, household archaeologists aim to identify different kinds of lifestyle led by different groups of people, be these wealthy or poor households, craft specialists or generalists, different ethnic groups or the like.

This interpretive pathway is what I call a *summarizing approach* (Kay 2020). It begins by devising a summary of a house's salient qualities in the form of tick-boxes of traits, quantifications of size or finds, or similar, before comparing it to other houses *as if one is comparing groups of people*. A simple version of this logic is that excavating a house with more obsidian finds than its neighbours means that there existed some group in the past that possessed or used more obsidian than others; a set of houses of equal size, with equal storage and cooking facilities, represents an egalitarian set of households; and so on. We can theorize these comparisons in diverse ways, and in relation to diverse models of social organization. Perhaps the high-obsidian household were traders in obsidian, or more wealthy, or had a specialized role. In any case, the count of obsidian artefacts acts as a summary of the salient social qualities of a set of people—a household—in relation to others.

Summarizing approaches were central to the original conception of household archaeology (Wilk and Rathje 1982; cf. Bailey 1990; Tringham 2012). As we saw in the last chapter, they underpin much of the baseline historical narrative of the Middle Eastern Neolithic: comparing houses as social units is one basis from which we can look for nascent specialization, prestige, or inequality as indications of faltering egalitarianism/rising 'complexity'. Especially as ethnographic insights, feminist theory, experimental archaeology, and artistic reconstruction have become consensus parts of Neolithic archaeology (see below), Neolithic archaeologists have developed more nuanced and historically-specific understandings of

summarizing data. But the fundamental premise that comparing houses is a way to compare different groups of people remains behind much of the research agenda in the field.

One recurring challenge for summarizing methods is what to compare, and where to draw spatial boundaries (cf. Chapter 2; Bailey 1990, 20-1). Should we treat any single set of four walls as a unit, or group houses that appear associated on a settlement plan as an 'extended household' (Kuijt 2018)? When buildings have multiple phases or rebuilds, should we treat each as a different unit or lump them as one (Twiss 2012)? And how do we address differences in preservation, excavation strategy, cleaning-out of houses in the past, and the like? *What* should we summarize, given the range of ways phenomena like social status, identity and influence can be materialized? Each of these questions has a dramatic effect on the kinds of middle-range inferences that summarizing approaches can support.

A deeper challenge came in the 1990s from feminist archaeologists like Julia Hendon (Hendon 1996) and Ruth Tringham (1991, 1995). Tringham alleged that the analytic units of summarizing analyses were 'faceless blobs', with houses standing in for ideal human groups devoid of meaningful internal dynamics and variation. Time, tension, gender and all the other animating dramas of household life were flattened out of analysis by casting households as units of comparison, rather than complex arenas of social action themselves. A related critique focused on the seeming universality of the household (Russell 1993), drawing attention to the substantial qualitative differences between domestic communities in different settings. These critiques led to a second interpretive pathway developing around houses, focused on their internal dynamics and qualitative character.

3.2.2 'Households with faces'? Ethnographic and imaginative insights

Tringham's call to investigate 'households with faces' drew together a number of emerging currents in the discipline. Postprocessual and structuralist approaches had already begun considering ways that interactions within the household generated far-reaching social dynamics, grounding the 'text' of material culture in its context of shared concepts, differentiated knowledge, and deeply ingrained habitus (Bailey 1990; Bourdieu 1977; Hodder 1982, 1990; Parker Pearson and Richards 1993). Feminist perspectives noted that a 'faceless' concept of the household tended to subsume the diverse experiences of men, women, children, powerful and subjugated individuals under a unified façade (Hendon 1996, 46; Tringham 1991). A summarizing concern with the *external* relations of households thus reproduced conventional gendered equations of 'public' spaces, male activities, and politics, with houses' interiors being 'private', female, and apolitical (Allison 1999; Hendon 1996,

55). All of this dovetailed with growing concern with gender, personhood and the bottom-up construction of social structure in related disciplines like anthropology (Moore 1986; Thornton 1980; Weiner 1976; Yanagisako 1979) and development studies (Ekejiuba 1995; Russell 1993), providing a rich range of conceptual models and discussions to build upon.

Populating houses with faces meant looking into ephemeral and highly localized social patterns—a feat for which established working methods in archaeology were poorly designed. Archaeologists had to seek new ways of learning about small spaces and interpersonal relationships in the past. Tringham's (1991) initial appeal was for imaginative reconstruction: better, she argued, to render *plausibly* fleshed-out people and daily dramas in our excavation reports than to operate under the manifestly false assumption that such dramas did not occur or did not matter. Moreover, the act of trying to imagine a fully fleshed -out prehistoric scene has real intellectual value, demanding new kinds of synthesis and provoking inferences and ideas that might not otherwise arise (Chesson 2012). This line of thought has led to increasing collaboration between archaeologists, visual artists, writers and digital developers (e.g. Chesson 2012; Fairbairn et al. 2005; Ferraby 2017; Tringham 2012).

Archaeologists' reconstructions have been aided by a growing empirical repertoire for qualifying what prehistoric households were like on the inside. An integrated approach to bodies and buildings led to advances in isotope studies of diet and mobility, especially focused on age and gender differences and how these may have played out in domestic life (e.g. Bentley 2013; Hastorf 1991; Pearson et al. 2013). Space syntax and access analyses sketch the way people engaged in different kinds of tasks and roles may have moved through houses and settlements differently (Cutting 2006; Eriksen 2019). Increased scrutiny of what Tringham (1995) calls 'place production' (and I call 'space making' in this thesis) has led to greater attention to the stratigraphy of houses and the range of events (use, modification, deposition, rebuilding) that built up their qualities through time, helping to diversify the range of 'scenes' and dynamics we see within domestic space (Eriksen 2016, 2019; Jones 2007; Stevanović 2012a).

The other vital aid in fleshing-out households has been the cross-fertilization of archaeological and ethnographic research. Ethnographic comparison was built into the household archaeology project from its beginnings (Wilk 1983; Wilk and Rathje 1982). Summarizing approaches were supplemented by ethnoarchaeological study in 'traditional' communities, that assessed the kinds of material traces different kinds of domestic activities and different kinds of social system might leave (e.g. Horne 1994; Kramer 1982). This allowed archaeological studies to build hypotheses, e.g. about population sizes and resource demands, the comparative 'material footprints' of autonomous or extended/intertwined households or

societies with different kinds of institutionalized inequality (Byrd 2002; Flannery 2002; Kuijt 2018; Watson 1980). Often such hypotheses were tied to explicitly universalist and evolutionary models. With the turn to 'households with faces', however, archaeologists began to use ethnography in a richer way, to fill in the kinds of scenes and dynamics we might imagine in past houses. A deeper interest in cultural variety has led to the wider range of institutional possibilities now considered in household archaeology, including House societies (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Gillespie 2000; González-Ruibal 2006; Joyce and Gillespie 2000), households defined by free movement or seasonal fission and fusion (Angelbeck and Grier 2012; Fairbairn et al. 2005), as well as households anchored in different ontological conceptions of matter and action (Boivin 2000; Eriksen 2016).

3.2.3 Ethnography against the ethnographic household: transformative relations

Although they have different concerns and tend to draw on different kinds of data and reasoning, the two interpretive pathways sketched above—summarizing and comparing houses and fleshing out relationships inside of them—complement one another well. Summarizing methods 'black box' the household to study its external relationships—the way it compares to neighbouring 'black boxes'—while inward-looking studies, supported by the raft of methods discussed above, sketch in the kinds of qualities and dramas that may have happened inside of a household within such a social order. Figure 3.1, a drawing by the artist Kathryn Killackey as a part of the Çatalhöyük Research Project, is an example of a scene that grows out of a combination of the two pathways. A pair of people share a private conversation while storing up grain in the side space of a Çatalhöyük house. This is supported by summarizing research suggesting that Çatalhöyük houses were autonomous and increasingly unequal, and spatial analysis suggesting that secluded side spaces kept their food reserves from public scrutiny (Bogaard et al. 2009). The reconstruction suggests some of the ways a nascent concept of private property and intimate bonds formed through daily in-house practice may have reinforced one another, drawing on multiple lines of evidence and traditions of archaeological thought.

But is this convergence of perspectives really as neat as it seems? A both-and approach to resolving epistemological challenges risks siloing different social dynamics in different parts of the past. We can have our quantifiable, comparable households *and* our households with faces, but only by fitting the one inside the other in a hierarchy of scale and significance (Figure 3.2). As Weismantel (2014, 259) writes, there is still an easy 'slippage between architecture and social structure [that] produces further slippage between the idea of the

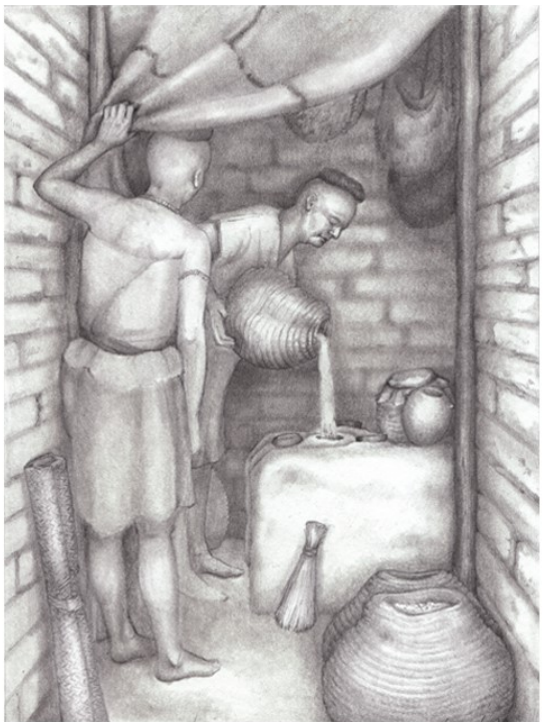


Figure 3.1. Reconstruction of a household scene in a storeroom at Çatalhöyük, by Kathryn Killackey. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

'house' and closely related concepts such as "family' and 'household."' The question becomes, not how life in houses was part of politics, but what practices to define as intra-household matters and what to define as 'public' political matters. We saw this in the narrative of the Neolithic that emerged in the previous chapter: ritual begins as a public matter then shifts into the household; food storage and the daily economy become increasingly household matters; and so on (§2.3). Even as our attention to the intricacies of life *within* households has increased, the unity of one excavated house with one human institution has been tacitly, if uncomfortably, accepted.

The drawbacks of a nested scalar approach show most clearly in those dynamics of households that are central in our own lives and other ethnographically-attested ways of living, but that household archaeologists tend to ignore or write off with a caveat or two. Households are organic phenomena, structured as much by the way they dissolve and reform in different combinations as by the way they organize practice in the short term (Blanton 1994; Pels 2010). Today, the way we marry and divorce; gain and lose jobs; move onto and off of friends' couches; rent and invest; maintain a house or let it decay—all of these fundamentally shape our social relations, yet none of them establishes a stable unit of lives and spaces. We are not alone in living this way. For example, Wilk (1983) notes that the average resident in Q′eqchi′ Maya villages at the time of study had only resided in his or

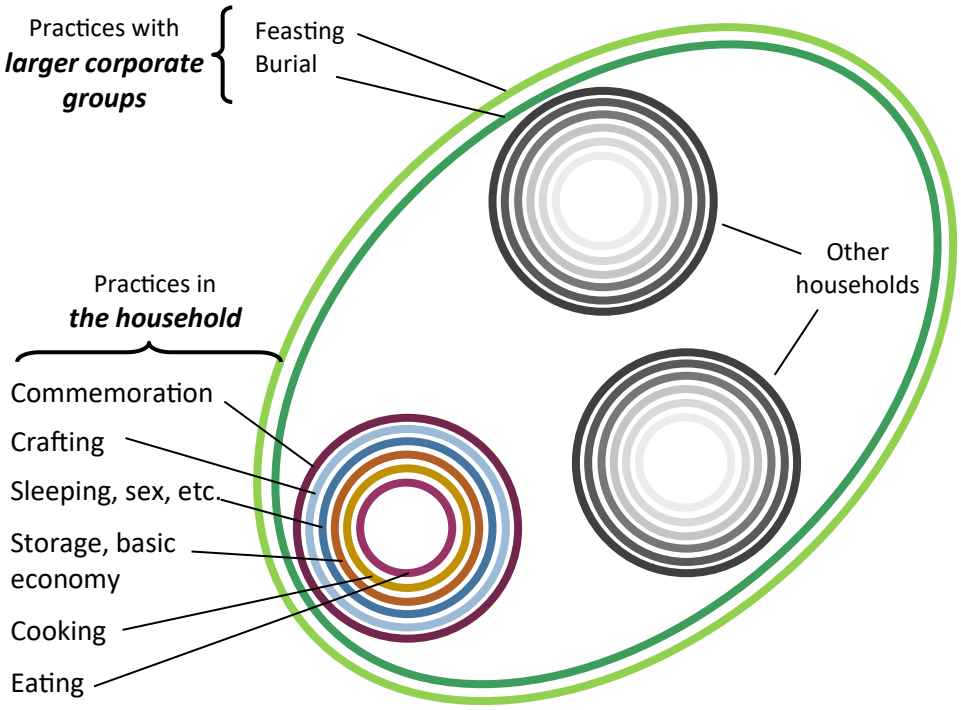


Figure 3.2. The default model of communities that develops by nesting 'households with faces' within a summarizing approach to social structure.

her current village for nine years, suggesting a great deal of flexibility in domestic relationships over even a single decade. Russell (1993) argues that 'households' are a western bureaucratic imposition on her Swazi hosts, for whom coresidence need not imply closeness and whose real economies and identities are more mobile and geographically dispersed. Horne (1982; 1994) records that, in a traditional Iranian farming village in the 20th century, a full one half of the rooms were not owned nor primarily used by the core residents of the compound they were a part of. Rather, a unique system of inheritance tied rooms together across dispersed compounds (Figure 3.3). This system of inheritance is gender-neutral, empowering female residents with similar property holdings to those of men, and undercuts the formation of hierarchy by steadily reshuffling authority. It is not, however, a timeless social tradition—it was partially established in the living memory of Horne's oldest informants, who were born in explicitly hierarchical and patriarchal manor estates (Horne 1991). The summarized archaeological qualities of a compound, or even a single room, in 1970s Baghestan would not record the nature of a single household or institution relative to others; it was by passing rooms from hand to hand and negotiating space through time that Baghestan's residents substantially *re*structured their society.

Horne's study drives home the fact that, however they might be institutionalized in the short run, communities are characterized as much by the way they change as by the way they compare to one another. In the short term—the timescales that most ethnographers work

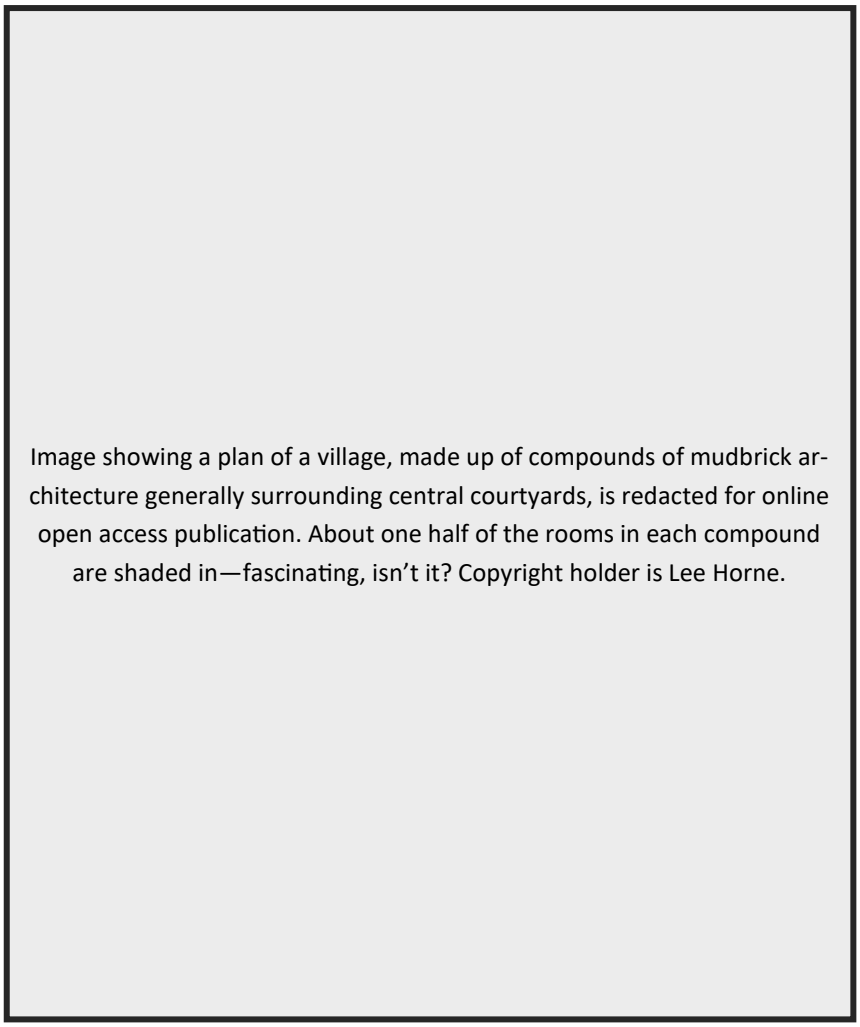


Figure 3.3. Domestic compounds in a 1970s farming village in Baghestan, Iran. Crosses designate primary living rooms. Shaded rooms are owned and used by people who primarily reside in different compounds. Horne 1982, fig.1.

at—people may or may not form clear institutional units like households that could be meaningfully black-boxed and studied in relation to one another (Figure 3.4). Over the life-span of a building or a person, even sharply-delineated domestic communities cannot be understood in black-boxes without losing something vital about the way relations are defined through change. As Carsten (2018, 114) concisely observes: however bounded they may look in a moment, 'houses over the long term enfold each other.'

This, too, is a part of seeing houses 'with faces' in the past (Tringham 1991): not only seeing people who are gendered, differently-empowered, or intimate within a momentary articulation of society, but also the *kinds of change people worked toward* and invested themselves in—the uncertainties, opportunities and eventualities of difference that animated their 'faces'. It is precisely what is lost in archaeological approaches that take houses to represent groups of people. Communities fold together, divide, form and dissolve as matter and history are layered onto spaces, bodies, and relationships. Most household archaeologists working in the prehistoric Middle East acknowledge this (e.g. Banning and Byrd 1987; Byrd 2002;

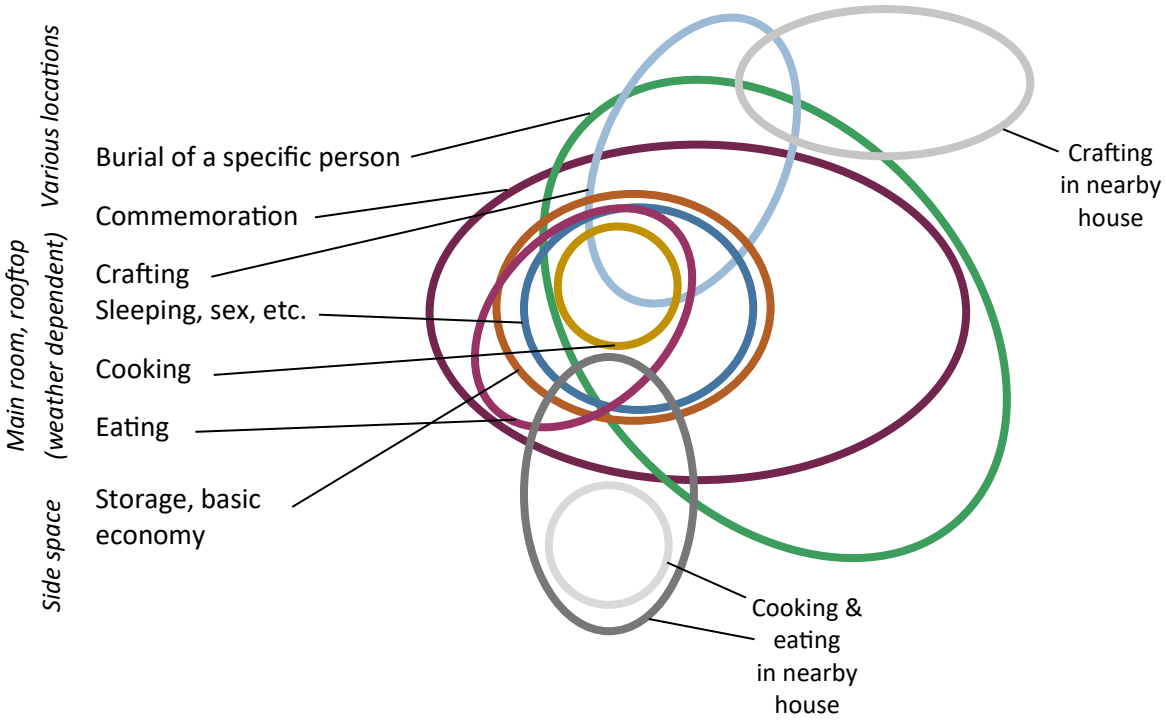


Figure 3.4. A looser model showing different practices gathering different ranges of participants, with complex overlaps between spaces and groups.

Düring 2007; Matthews 2005a). However, with a few exceptions (e.g. Baird 2005; Carter et al. 2015; Pilloud 2009), the recombinatory dynamics of prehistoric communities have not been studied empirically. Mostly, archaeologists note the possibility that households were dynamically constituted in relation to architecture, but proceed on the working assumption that houses reflect households' qualities. As Pels (2010) notes, it is easy to describe in generic terms the intimate but shifting relationship between households and houses, and the kinds of breaks and discontinuities we should expect to have happened in the past. We can know, in principle, that the way a past society structured partnerships and fallings-out, found places for new generations of adults, handled accidents or structural crises that produced homeless or isolated people (a roof collapsing; an elder left widowed and childless), was vital to their politics. But studying these with archaeological evidence is another story.

I take up this challenge in the remainder of this chapter. A recent upswell in thinking about the active role of materials in human society invites us to reconsider the notion of community. By opening up politics to more-than-human participants and anchoring community in change rather than unity—pushing even beyond 'households with faces'—we can reappraise excavated houses, and develop new interpretive pathways for understanding domestic space in a livelier and historically consequential way.

3.3 Following material politics: a building biography approach

We will likely never be able to reconstruct particular dramas and convergences of events that drove institutional politics in Çatalhöyük houses. The site's 200-plus excavated buildings must have witnessed bitter arguments and peaceful evenings, the formation and breakup of relationships, births, deaths, illnesses, departures and returns. Depending on the kinds of institutions we imagine in the town, perhaps some people were recognized as authoritative elders or ritual specialists. Perhaps there were momentous gatherings where neighbourhoods argued about how to navigate a crop failure or how to perform the funeral of a well-connected person. Perhaps some people even came to owe service or obedience to others, through misfortune, marriage, or both simultaneously. These sorts of events surely informed the way practice was organized and space was formed and transformed; but our vantage point 9,000 years later barely leaves us glimpses of them.

If politics was only a process of human relationships and human dramas, perhaps the story would end here. But there are other actors in domestic politics, and transformative processes that are intimately engaged with, but not reducible to, the human lives that shape a place (Bennett 2010; Harris 2013; Lucas 2012). Both approaches sketched above are broadly 'representational' social-scientific approaches (Anderson and Harrison (Eds) 2010; Thrift 2007), in that they take the material world to *reflect* the actions of primarily human agents. The active capacity of mudbricks, squirrels, ovens, and microbes to shape communities' dynamics and societies' futures is downplayed, except inasmuch as they help us to draw inferences about the people and systems 'behind' the material.

In this section, I develop a *material political* approach to built space that will help to understand Çatalhöyük houses in a more consequential and dynamic way. Law & Mol (2008) define material politics in opposition to two more established understandings of politics. On the one hand, most social scientific research (and conventional wisdom) approaches politics as a conversation or contest between human groups or institutions. This includes much of the history of Neolithic politics recounted in Chapter 2: households assert their autonomy, history houses compete for prominence, and so on. A second model, most closely associated with Foucault and Latour, situates politics in the imposition of materials. A speed-bump slows down traffic, not through debate or conceptualization but by intervening in the practicalities of driving (Latour 1998, 187–188). Law and Mol note that this latter model tends to present politics as a single, hegemonic order, as a *fait accompli* rather than an opening-up of possibilities. But politics, Law & Mol argue, is all about potential *and* material: it is about how we work through *what is* to define *what could be*.

Following material politics is a demanding task. It involves tracing the ways materials constrain horizons and drive change in specific directions, and the way they open up alternatives and multiplicities. No single analytic tack can do this. Here I develop four propositions that we can follow between excavated materials and the material politics that they have been part of, and that will be central to the argument of this thesis.

- Communities are not stable units, but collaborations of diverse participants oriented toward change.
- Matter acts on several different registers within such collaborations.
- Action within material communities is always contingent and historically-situated, forming specific genres or fields of action that make sense in a specific context.
- A space's biography reflects the actions, intersections and histories of multiple communities that may involve the space in different, even conflicting capacities.

These propositions are not solely philosophical. They also highlight entry points into the material politics of houses that we can study hands-on with archaeological evidence. After fleshing out the four propositions above, I will detail biographical methods that use the specific archaeological record of Çatalhöyük houses to investigate material politics in the 7th millennium.

3.3.1 Who does a house hold? More-than-human communities and collaboration

In Chapter 1, I proposed that houses do not represent communities: they participate in many. Buildings, and their material components, play a wide range of social roles through a range of capacities. They shape people's physiology by sheltering them and habituating them into specific forms of movement such as squatting, sitting, climbing ladders or ducking through crawlholes; they channel movement and generate encounters between some people while keeping others apart; and they weather, burn, fall apart, and generate need for repair or abandonment. These are not passive traits nor are they strictly secondary to human agency. It is not just that material can resist the best-laid plans of human builders, although this is true. Our designs are also contingent upon active, situated capacities (and incapacities) of the materials that make up space (Robb 2015). If we let buildings—taken whole, or broken into their component parts and layers—stand as members of communities, then we are no longer

left inferring communities' dynamics from dregs and footprints. Instead, we have community members at our trowels' tips (Lucas 2013).

Letting nonhumans into communities as active participants fundamentally changes our sense of what a community is. The cast of characters can be extended almost infinitely. The geographers Hinchliffe and Whatmore (2006; Whatmore 2006; Whatmore and Hinchliffe 2010) have traced the variety of animal species that help to shape urban spaces and urban politics, tracing out 'more-than-human' communities; Bennett's (2010, 23) 'living, throbbing confederations' include human actors alongside power lines, squirrels, birds, roads, and more. Given (2018) charts the role of 'convivial' microorganisms, macroorganisms, minerals, geologies, and human interventions in sustaining soils and agricultural communities. Harris (2013) presents an overarching reformulation of the archaeological concept of community, drawing on DeLanda's (2006) assemblage theory to trace out variable communities of humans, animals, soils, structures, artefacts, and more implicated in British Neolithic depositional practice. All of these suggest that, when we think of domestic communities, we should not just envision nuclear families, extended families, 'practical kin' (Pilloud and Larsen 2011) or other human groups standing within a material backdrop: clays and ochres, sheep and gardens contributed crucial action and direction to the whole. As Lucas (2013, 377-8) observes, recognizing the vitality of matter means that 'Humans remain part of the story, but they are not *the* story . . . . [the communities archaeologists study most readily] are . . . . collectives, assemblages of agents of all types.'

But extending the membership of communities reformulates the concept of community at a deeper level. If anything, from a landlord to a bargeboard to an atmosphere can be part of defining a community, how do we know what to count, what's in and what's out? Suddenly, institutional rosters, the kinds of listings and counts of people we might make on a tax form or a census cross-tabulation, do not suffice. In a more-than-human framework, communities lose their membership and gain participants or constituents. They emerge through interaction and interrelation of diverse elements. Indeed, the relational materialism that underpins most of this thinking (see overviews in Fowler 2013; Jervis 2019) tends to blur the line between what we would conventionally consider events and what we would consider objects, entities, or communities (DeLanda 1997, 2006; Lucas 2013; Harris 2013). Communities are simultaneously beings (entities) and becoming (events, processes).

There is no space here to draw out an overarching ontology of entities, processes, and events. Others in archaeology and social philosophy have carried this discussion some distance (e.g. Barad 2007; Bennett 2010; DeLanda 1997, 2006; Fowler 2013; Fowler and

Harris 2015; Ingold 2008; Lucas 2012). Although indebted to these conversations, I wish to suggest a rather more concise working definition of a more-than-human community: it is a collaboration oriented toward material change. Such communities can come in well-defined types—a family, a garden, an office, a state—with fairly regular kinds of constituents and trajectories, or they can be ad hoc, nameless and irregular. What brings them together is an involvement or investment in bringing about certain material conditions that would not otherwise come to be. Not all constituents need be conscious and wilful of this direction, and indeed they need not have any particular consciousness at all. But a community cannot exist without a trajectory, some intertwining of the active capacities and trajectories of different elements that meshes them together however loosely or briefly (Ingold 2011, 63). Community is transforming the world together—and playing-out history. Put otherwise, where we can trace out a trajectory of change in the archaeological record, we are invited to think about the politics of community that shaped that world in that particular way.

The link between this concept of community and the perspective of material politics that I laid out above should be clear. Material politics is how action adjudicates between different potentials and different futures; communities intertwine diverse actors in diverse capacities pushing the world toward one future or another. Equally it should be clear that the kind of material political analysis I am proposing cannot be fulfilled by focusing strictly on humans as actors and materials as reflections of human action. People alone do not shape the future; it is by working with and alongside clays and rainfall, goats and grindstones that people move toward this or that eventuality. And all of these actors impose conditions, contingencies, and emergent qualities on any one community or action (Hodder 2012; Robb 2013). Rather than standing as the footprint of an institution, a house or a monument appears as a vibrant nexus of diverse materialities, intentions, intersections and push-and-pull between futures. Matter in more-than-human communities is inherently political.

3.3.2 Following the matter: active registers

When we start to explore a house as an assemblage cobbled together through time and intertwined with diverse actors, even a single structure becomes exponentially richer. How are we to follow the different moving elements, accumulating layers, and trajectories of change that the matter in a house was involved in? One way in which I will do this is to break down the whole house into components, defining different ways material forms and features, from hearths to plaster layers to burials, brought different active capacities into domestic space at Çatalhöyük.

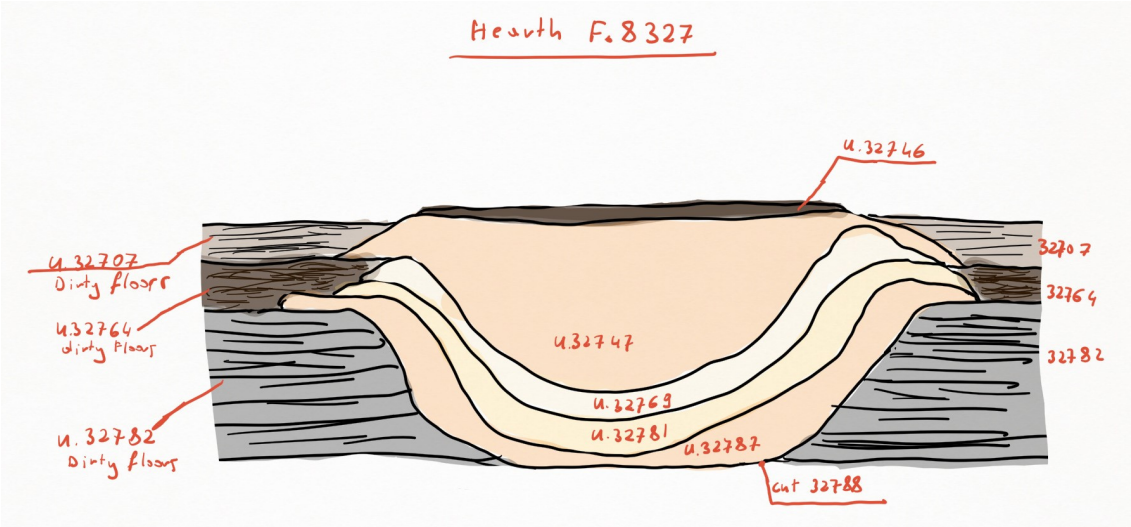


Figure 3.5. Field sketch showing a section through a Çatalhöyük hearth and surrounding floor plasters. Sketch: Arkadiusz Klimowicz, used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

Even single features at Çatalhöyük were active in communities in a wide range of capacities. Consider a simple hearth in a Çatalhöyük house (Figure 3.5). When it first formed, this hearth was a single clay layer, moulded into a shallow cut. We could follow the interplay between clay and human hands that produced this form (cf. Ingold 2000 ch.18; McFadyen 2016), or try to infer the design process behind the hearth's creation: why, how, and to what end hearths could be created in this particular historical setting (Robb 2015; Kay *under review*). But the hearth acted in human communities through more than its making. It enabled cooking practices through its longer life, and these centred communities, afforded sharing and distinguished cooks from diners (Demirergi et al. 2014; Hastorf 2012). It drove the house's economy, or more evocatively its metabolism, 'ingesting' fuel and raw food and 'excreting' heat and meals (Lucas 2016). It created light and shadow, warmth, smokiness, building atmospheres in the space (Sørensen 2015). It structured time, too, as its several layers attest. Its low moulded form was vulnerable to being overtopped by rising plaster floors, and it actively contributed to their rise by 'excreting' ash layers onto them. If it was to continue, it had to rise steadily, demanding human investment (Hodder 2012). Finally, we could explode the spatial boundaries of the scene altogether and think of the way open hearths were entangled with cooking pots, clay balls, dung piles, cuisines, and other kinds of entities that were bound up with hearths (González Carretero 2020; Hodder and Doherty 2014).

A house was a complex intersection of different features, acting in different capacities in different communities. In this thesis, I capture the range of capacities any spatial feature or layer might have had within a framework of four *active registers*. These are:

Formation
Captures the creative dialogue between materials, concepts and bodies as space is deliberately reshaped (Ingold 2000, 339–348). This could include erecting a horned pillar, staging a burial, or weaving a basket: anywhere decisions were made and materials worked with to substantially and rapidly produce new forms.

Insistence
Captures the variety of ways a material form, like an oven, platform, or sculpture, becomes involved in different contexts while it remains physically coherent and at the surface of the world. Gertrude Stein (1998) coined the term to describe active qualities that are neither encapsulated in a moment, nor repeated, but rather *distributed* through a diversity of actions (cf. Ascher and Ascher 1981; DeMarrais 2017 for archaeological adaptations). As regards features in Çatalhöyük houses, this can include the way ladder entries directed movement into and through the building; the way fixed querns centred grinding practice; and the way hearths and ovens produced light, smoke, shadow, and trip hazards.

Embedding
Captures the way material acts as part of larger emergent phenomena in a non-individuated way (DeLanda 2006). Much as no car can change the earth's climate, no one wall, plaster layer or oven was responsible for creating the 14m-tall tell at Çatalhöyük; but if no walls, plasters or ovens were built, the aggregate effect would not have occurred. The most important embedding action in this thesis is the way thousands of features and layers constituted a rising world with a rich subsurface, where the past outcomes of social action were literally located beneath people's feet. As we will see, this aggregate creation, the sum of millions of smaller space-making acts, was a precondition for a range of other actions on other registers, from the burial of the dead (an intensive process of formation) to the mustering of collaborative work-groups to maintain walls' insistence (§4.6).

Translation
Captures the way material, by acting on humans, helped to shape other materials and media at a distance via concepts, memories, typologies and habitus (e.g. Bourdieu 1977; Fowler 2017; Jones 2007). Through human intermediaries, matter can act to shape the world at a distance. This includes the way earlier burial performances were sometimes remembered and 'cited' in later events (Jones 2007); the way houses took on similar topologies even when spatial constraints made this standardization impractical; or the way a lifetime of ducking through crawlholes and clambering up ladders trained people to move around their world.

These registers help us to think about the way different material features contributed to communities through time. Indeed, we can describe the biography of any given feature in terms of the activation and de-activation of different registers. Consider our hearth again. Its biography began and ended with moments of intensive formation: one as a low scoop was dug and lined with clay; and one when it was infilled with rubbly material and transformed into a raised pedestal. Between, there was a period of perhaps several years where the form of the hearth remained more or less stable (though steadily raised through maintenance activity). In this time the hearth insisted in moments ranging from use as a cooking installation to more background roles as a trip hazard, a shadow in the floor, or a vaguely-sensed radiator of warmth in the evening's darkness. After this, it was filled in with clay, decommissioned as a hearth. It remained present underneath a later pedestal, and after its building was disused, below metres of rubble, midden and subsequent architecture until it was excavated in 2016.

Different kinds of features have different biographical 'shapes' when we look at them in this way (Figure 3.6). Some are punctuated, high-intensity events that leave little enduring trace in their location, but foster strong memories and durable social bonds. Others begin in brief, understated moments but insist over long periods. Sometimes the registers have a clear sequence to them: brief formation, extended insistence, and millennia of embedding in the larger tell. In other cases, like a re-opened grave, a feature that was embedded invisibly below the surface of the tell was brought back to the surface, reshaped, or even retrieved.

It is impossible to fully generalize the way material acts in this way. The specifics matter: a grave's formation was surely a different sort of phenomenon than a hearth's formation, and a wall embedded below the tell's surface contributed differently to the larger whole than a small obsidian cluster. But framing material's ability to act within communities in terms of registers helps to delineate the kinds of phenomena we should be concerned with depending on the timescales we are interested in. If we trace a hearth's or a horned pillar's biography, are we interested in why, how, and to what effect that life started; what happened across its length, what remained after it was buried or how it shaped human knowledge of the past? Each scale will help us to think about politics in different ways, from the way communities intersected in moments to the way they developed, dissolved and folded together over generations. Drawing out such implications will be one of the backbones of my analytic approach in this thesis, as my biographies of Çatalhöyük houses use features' biographies as their primary building blocks (see below). Crucially, by directing our attention to the active roles matter can take, these registers help us to think about communities through actors whose 'faces' we can literally touch and whose biographies we can study empirically through careful analysis of context.

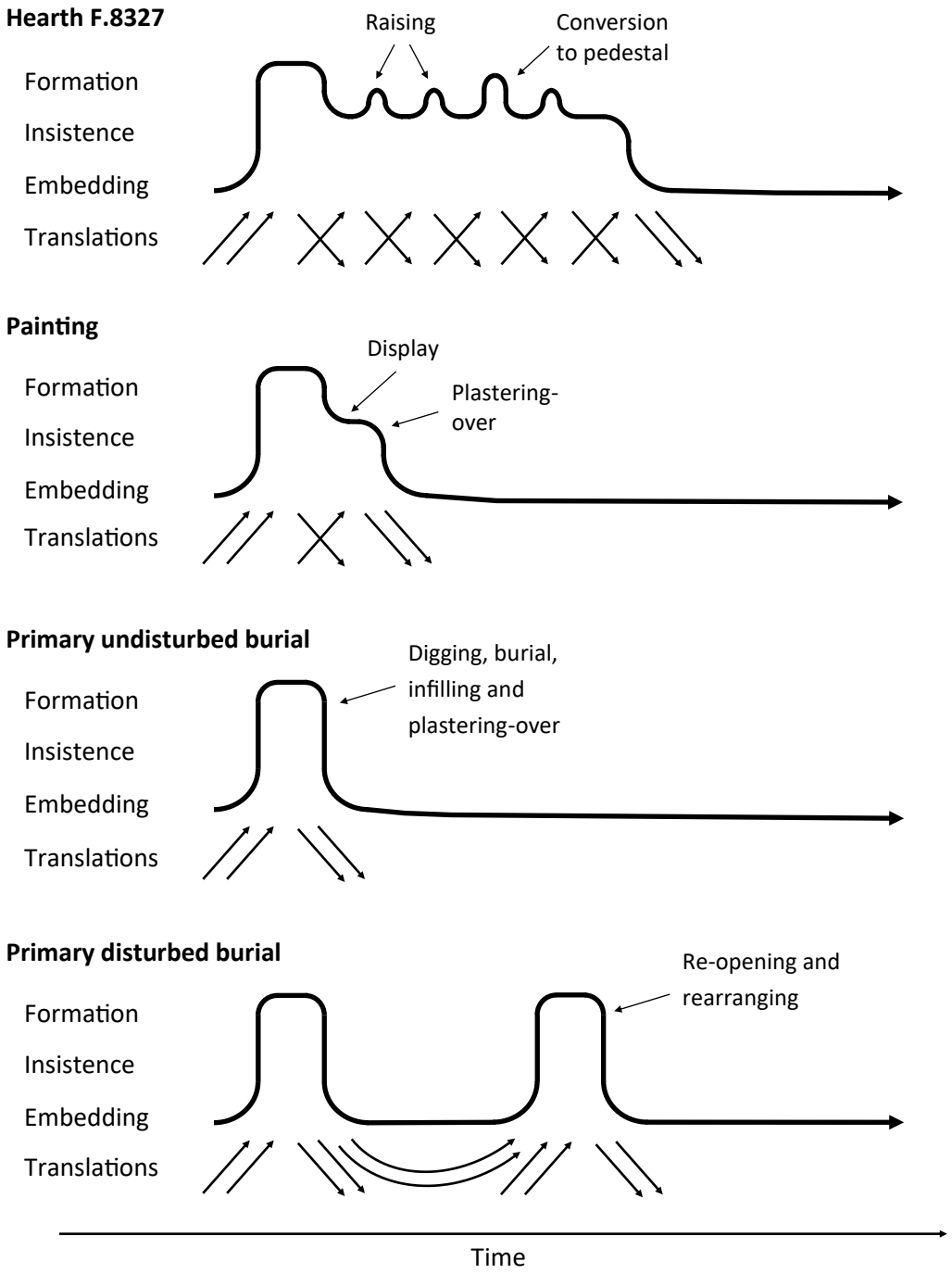


Figure 3.6. The activation of features' active registers over their use lives, showing different biographical 'shapes'.

3.3.3 Following transformative moments: fields of action

Acting in a more-than-human world is not as straightforward as we sometimes think. It is not enough for a group of people to make a decision and enact it. They need to work *with* the right people with the right bodies and skills. And they need to work *with* nonhumans as well, navigating the various contingencies and implications of the materials, animals and other actors involved. Ingold (2000, 339–348) has famously traced this in his essay on weaving a

basket: a basket cannot take just any form, because it has to emerge from the joint action of skilled human hands and forceful materials. Nor are such intersections limited to the moment of creation: they form part of longer trajectories in which lives and materials intertwine. Robb (Robb 2010, 507) gives the example of potting, which can be done in order to have a single pot — or to be a potter. Being a potter entails not only gathering, working and firing clay, but also training with somebody; accessing resources and facilities; making pots that people around you desire; being the appropriate kind of person to do this task. Potters make pots in order to reconfigure their place in a collaborative social world (cf. Dobres 2000, 87).

Another way to follow material politics through excavated houses is to investigate moments of creation or change, and the *fields of action* in which these happen. Fields of action are known ways for people to resituate themselves in relations they are already immersed within, which specify 'the proximate goal, the necessary material elements, the roles and attitudes of participants, and the symbolic context' (Robb 2008, 341; cf. 'fields of discourse', Barrett 1988). They are not generic, but historically-situated, fitted to ontological parameters of what can be (Alberti and Marshall 2009), value parameters of what matters (Graeber 2001), and the material shape of a place and time. Fields of action are an essential device for understanding unfamiliar action in the past: what was the value of mummifying bodies, joining a silent monastic order, or painting a cave? But equally, they help us find differences among superficially similar things or processes. A mudbrick wall in the Neolithic did not necessarily work in the same way as a mudbrick wall in the Middle East today, if it drew together collaborations and impacted futures differently (§4.6).

Analysing fields of action is more demanding than other frameworks for studying things' formation, such as through the lenses of craft production, technology, or commodity economies. We have to think about how creative action fit into the lives and projects of a range of people and communities (Robb 2015). Several lines of information can help us to do this. Fields of action are constrained and qualified by the materials implicated in them: being a potter is a field of action because of the specialized skills, equipment and material sources (e.g. potter's fields) that creating quality pottery requires, conditions that are in turn imposed by the thermal, mechanical and geographical qualities of clays and tempers. Tracing out these material contingencies and entanglements can begin to define the parameters of fields of action (Hodder 2012). *Intervening* in the material generates and situates knowledge (Hacking 1983; Mol 2002), and close attention to the context in which interventions were carried out can help us to trace out further contextual parameters for different kinds of action. Different fields of action are characterized by the kinds, quantities, and temporalities of the labour they demand, and the way they generate different kinds of experiences and understandings for different participants (McFadyen 2016). Finally, creative

action sets up a timeframe and set of alternatives for future action: planting wheat also entails preparing to harvest it in time; building a house in this or that way sets up a specific recurring cycle of degeneration and maintenance, and a set of consequences in case such maintenance is shirked (Brand 1994).

As I will explore further in the next chapter (§4.6), all of this binds together human knowledge of what the world is, how it can be made to work, and how other people work, with the material negotiation of communities' futures. This is the crux of how material politics has been studied in contemporary communities: through interventions like boiling pigswill to control microbial flows (Law and Mol 2008) or weeding a community garden before an NGO funder's annual review (Hinchliffe 2010; see below). These interventions are not totalitarian, nor are they fleeting and open-ended: they open up certain possibilities and close off others, constraining the horizons of multiple communities at once. Examining confluences of events and short-term contexts of creative action at Çatalhöyük—wall-building, the closing of kitchens, the erection of sculptural displays, burials—will likewise bring political turning points at Çatalhöyük to the fore. Exploring the way Çatalhöyük people knew to work with, and intervene in, the material world will help us to understand how action in houses drew in and reformulated more-than-human communities, and charted a trajectory for the site's history.

3.3.4 Following the assemblage: multiples and reconciliation

Finally, we can trace material politics by considering the overall assemblage of a house, its changing capacities, qualities and involvement in communities over its life-course. Houses are more than sums of their parts or chains of formative actions. As emergent wholes, they have trajectories or biographies of their own as they are shaped and reshaped, contextualized and involved in changing social circumstances (Bailey 1990; Brand 1994; Carsten 2018). By following houses' overall trajectories, the way they gathered a shifting range of practices, memories, capacities and dependencies in a place, we can get a fuller sense of the way domestic spaces were drawn into politics in Çatalhöyük society. This will be the central interpretive pathway that I take in this thesis.

Buildings' biographies, like people's biographies or features' biographies, can have differing shapes or paths depending on the way they are involved in the world around them. This is easy to see if we compare different places and times: houses in some social contexts tend to expand and contract regularly alongside the course of married couples' adult lives (e.g. Moore 1984), Victorian terraces tend to gradually gain extensions on their fronts and backs

(Till and Schneider 2005), Horne's (1991, 1994) Iranian compounds see rooms alternate between living room and store-room function as they are rearranged through inheritance (see above), and so on. Within societies, too, differences between buildings' biographies can key into central political dynamics. Indeed, this is a core aspect of the 'history house' hypothesis that I described in Chapter 2 (§2.4.3): social spaces were distinguished biographically, with some houses' biographies characterized by meticulous repetition and 'citation' of the past and others shaped more fluidly as history was less of a concern (Hodder and Pels 2010). By tracing out the courses of change and maintenance that buildings underwent, we can address some of the crucial material political dynamics that characterized places, lives, and actions.

It is important to remember, however, that buildings do not stand in for people; they work with them. This is no less a pitfall for biographical analysis than for summarizing analyses. There is a risk that, in advocating for a biographical approach to houses, I set up an interpretive pathway where the shape of buildings' biographies represents the shape of specific communities' biographies. This would replicate the same one-house, one-community analytic structure I rejected above, albeit with a dynamic twist. As I will show in Chapter 4, this is not satisfactory for understanding the transformative action that shaped houses' lives at Çatalhöyük. Houses were involved in diverse communities in diverse capacities, at any one time and over their lives.

The challenge, then, is to work with our objects—houses, hearths, moments of transformation—as *multiples* (Hinchliffe 2010; Jones, Díaz-Guardamino and Crellin 2016; Mol 2002). Mol (2002, 5) defines multiples as objects that are simultaneously 'more than one, less than many.' They are more than one, because a range of communities know them, engage with them and recruit them into action in different ways. This is no relativistic stance, where a house or a hearth is whatever some community perceives it to be: 'far from necessarily falling into fragments, multiple objects tend to hang together somehow' (Mol 2002, 5) because of the common grounding provided by the material and its biography. Hinchliffe (2010) has illustrated this well with a spatial example. Hinchliffe studies a community garden in greater Manchester, funded by an NGO and directed at immigrant women. The women who work the garden know it through their hands, noses and muscles; they are involved directly in the 'conviviality of soil' that agrarian workers know well (Given 2018). Neighbours, some more pleased than others, know the garden through their eyes and construe it through supportive or complaining comments to the local council. The NGO knows the garden primarily through paperwork, budget sheets and staged photographs. All of these communities involve the garden in diverse projects and ambitions, and know it as different things. Yet through its materiality, they intersect. An evaluation leading to a reduced tools budget can affect the tomatoes, and a photogenic bunch of tomatoes can

impact an evaluation. The stakeholders' fundamentally different and sometimes contradictory needs are *reconciled* through the material history of the garden, by what it does and doesn't actually become (see Figure 1.2).

As with Hinchliffe's garden, so with Çatalhöyük houses. As we follow the active capacities of different features and the range of contingent, creative actions that built up a space, stitching together an emergent whole, the question is not 'what kind of community did this' but 'how did different communities enlist this house, so that its history played out as it did?' In more concrete terms, I will assemble evidence for the shape of Çatalhöyük houses' biographies in relative timelines, showing the changing assemblage of features that acted (by forming, insisting, by becoming embedded and being translated) to compose the larger whole of the house (see below). From these, a range of analyses can highlight specific changing roles that houses played, suggesting changing assemblages of overall roles and involvement. The shape of these biographies will in turn illuminate the politics that reverberated through houses over the course of the 7th millennium, the way communities intersected through the material and charted a trajectory toward the future (Chapters 6 & 7).

3.4 Tracing houses' biographies at Çatalhöyük: constructing relative timelines

Following the material politics of houses demands that we study houses differently. It especially demands a lot of our ability to discern time and process. In part, this is constrained by the material nature of the remains we excavate, and the conditions under which we excavate them. Architectural styles that do not form tells, like pit-houses or free-standing wooden houses preserved just under the ploughsoil, may give us less information to work with than the houses studied here, or at least information of a qualitatively different sort (but see Bailey 2018; Eriksen 2019; Jones 2007). Sites excavated under time constraints and poor weather, or written-up rapidly as grey literature, will capture temporality and process differently than slow, studious and long-lived excavation projects. A material political approach cannot be simply a new way of thinking about the past ('add theory and stir'). It has to come along with new ways of doing archaeology, from field tasks to the data manipulations we perform (Lucas 2012). And it will be better suited to some pasts than others.

We are fortunate, at Çatalhöyük and similar sites, to encounter an ancient architecture almost ideally suited to temporal analysis. Space was produced at Çatalhöyük by layering on clays, ashes, pigments, bricks. The implosion and superimposition of old houses buried structures

deeply, protecting them from taphonomic effects near the surface. The burning of houses at the site's apogee and the waterlogging of the tell's lower levels have further conserved some perishable materials and fine details that would degrade rapidly elsewhere. The Hodder project's commitment to household archaeology, microarchaeology, and multivocality has produced information of kinds that are rarely captured as archaeologists dismantle sites.

In order to follow material politics along the lines I described above I assemble the temporal information packed into the layered structure of Çatalhöyük houses. By manipulating the stratigraphic information in the Harris matrices of Çatalhöyük houses (Harris 1997), I have produced detailed *relative timelines* of twelve Çatalhöyük houses (Taylor et al. 2015), showing the ways they changed as matter was layered onto them. Below, after briefly situating the method relative to other kinds of biographical information used at Çatalhöyük, I will walk through the process of deriving a relative timeline from a Harris matrix using a fragment of a building's biography. This will help to reflect on the kinds of information that a relative timeline brings to the fore, and the constraints and caveats that the method raises. The next chapter will pick up from this point, showing ways that a full relative timeline can open up political dimensions of a Çatalhöyük house that have been little-explored thus far.

3.4.1 Introducing Building 18

I will use Building 18 to illustrate the process of creating a relative timeline, and the challenges and insights that the method presents in a material political perspective (Figure 3.7). Building 18 is one of the earliest structures excavated at Çatalhöyük, sitting near the bottom of the South Area sequence. It was built atop a penning area simultaneously with Building 23 to the west, and the two buildings shared a party wall with a crawlhole connecting them. In the 1960s, Mellaart dug a deep sounding through Building 18 (Mellaart 1964). Between the 1960s and 1990s, as the site lay untouched, this trench slumped wider, leaving a vast truncation spanning the entire space. Two narrow strips survived to be excavated in the 1990s (Farid 2005c, 127–137): a northern side space containing numerous plaster storage bins, and a strip at the south of the space containing a kitchen area. The only stratigraphic connection between the two areas is the masonry of Building 18's walls.

The southern remnant of Building 18 furnishes a small example of the ways I will work with Çatalhöyük stratigraphy in coming chapters. The fully-excavated Çatalhöyük houses that I study in this thesis comprise hundreds of stratigraphic units each; their Harris matrices and relative timelines are too large to print legibly and too intricate to discuss every detail of the process (see Appendix A). Building 18's kitchen strip is a manageable sequence of 55 units

Figure 3.7. Building 18 under excavation. Top: looking east, with kitchen area at right. Bottom: looking south at the kitchen. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

(Figure 3.8). As we will see in Chapter 6, it also provides a good example in capsule of the biographical dynamics of early Çatalhöyük kitchens, even if it is impossible to situate its ovens in the context of a fuller functioning house.

The matrix begins at the bottom with levelling and construction events at the start of the building's life, then immediately divides into two branches: one capturing features and layers in the southwest of the building (at right) and one capturing features and layers in the south-centre and southeast (at left). Stratigraphic links were never established between the two areas. This makes it difficult to reconstruct the sequence of changes over the course of the building's life from an empirical basis. Instead, excavators have introduced a series of

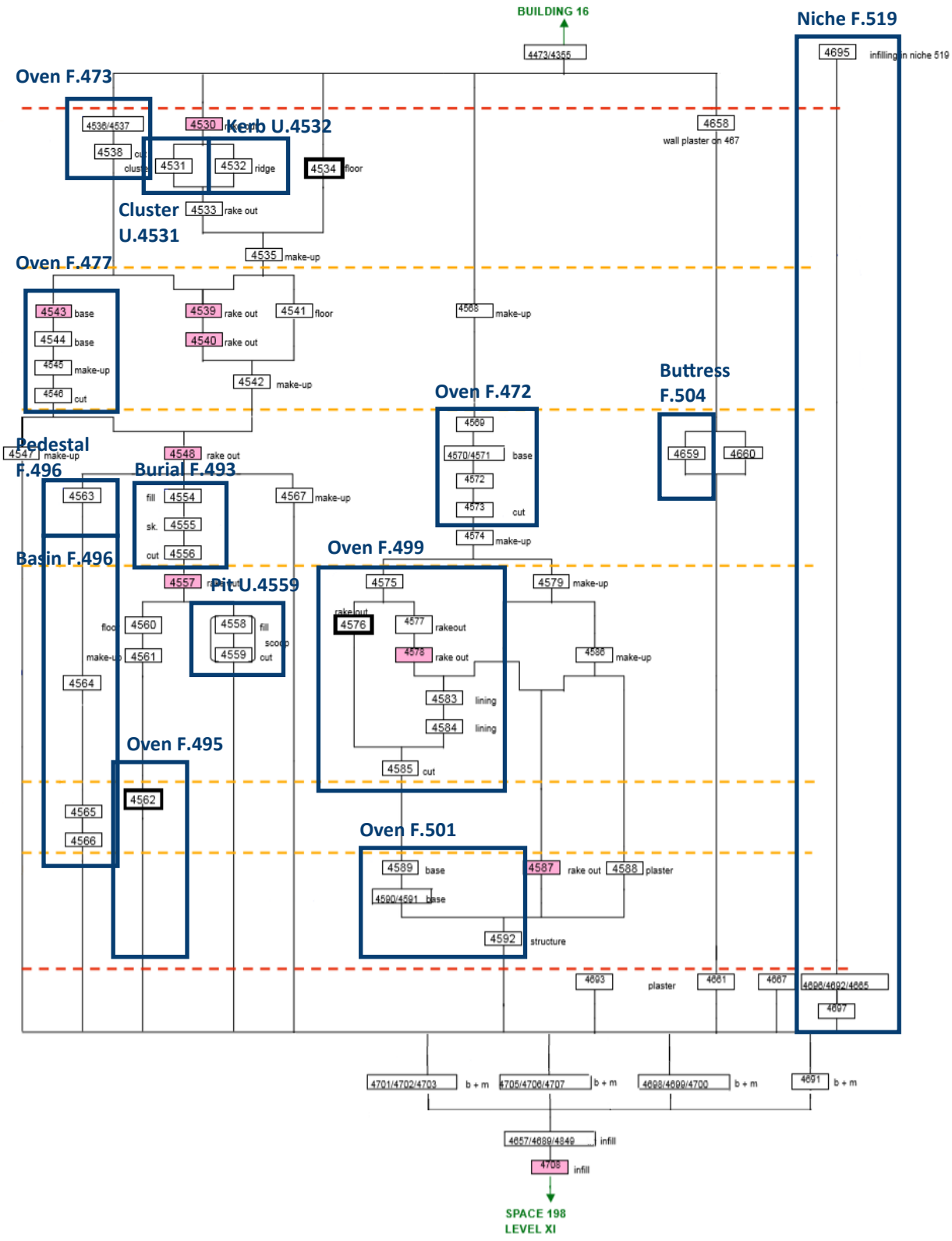


Figure 3.8. Harris matrix of the southern half of Building 18 (modified excerpt from Farid 2005c, fig.5.15. Used with permission, Çatalhöyük Research Project).

phases and extended the matrix in different parts so that one oven falls in each phase, following a long-standing convention at the site (see below). Other features and changes are linked into this framework by stratigraphic relations with the ovens within either branch. The ovens that dominate the chronology are presented in the matrix alternating between the southwest and south-centre: first F.501, a badly truncated oven base in the southwest, and then F.495, another poorly preserved base in the south-centre sitting directly atop the foundation levelling; F.499 followed by F.472 in the south-west, then F.477 and finally F.473 in the south-centre. Along the way, a number of compound plaster floor units, ash spreads, a burial, and a small bin converted to a pedestal build up in the room. The matrix culminates at top with a pair of units representing the demolition and infill of Building 18.

This is a simple sequence, and fairly straightforward. The only complicating factor is the lack of stratigraphic connections documented between the southwest corner and the south-central/southeast area. Nevertheless, even this fragment of a house conserves a rich history of creation, maintenance and modification. How can we capture the spatial and temporal structure of this sequence, and the political moments and trajectories that worked through it? There are several established ways of working with such a sequence, which I will review here before detailing the relative timeline methods used in this thesis.

3.4.2 Representing time in Çatalhöyük houses: relative chronology and contemporaneity

As excavators work through the layers of a Çatalhöyük house, they compile a Harris matrix showing the stratigraphic relations among contexts. In postexcavation, these are reviewed, revised, and phased. Phasing adjusts for one of the fundamental weaknesses of the Harris matrix, and the stratigraphic method more generally: a matrix properly captures the *sequence* of deposits and truncations that made up a space, but it does not speak to events' *contemporaneity* (Harris 1997). Strictly speaking, a stratigrapher can never state for certain what deposits were made at the same moment; she can only state that if one feature is earlier or later than another, and then only if there is a direct stratigraphic link (one feature overlies another, or cuts another). Major events in structures' histories that affected large parts of the space at once sometimes tie together the stratigraphy of a whole building; but most Çatalhöyük houses have branches, as in Building 18, that were not linked in the field and cannot be linked in postexcavation. In these cases, phasing produces a coherent narrative out of a best estimate.

Although this is a valuable process, phasing buildings in this way has significant limitations. All stratigraphic analysis (including that in this thesis) incorporates excavators' and

stratigraphers' discretion to deal with the inherent uncertainty and ambiguity of archaeological evidence. But there is also room in the phasing process for conventional wisdom to be written into the data. For example, Farid (2005c, 116) notes that there has been a tradition of assigning one oven per phase during the postexcavation of kitchen areas, including the southern fragment of Building 18. This fits the widely held idea that Çatalhöyük houses were self-sufficient domestic units. However, as in Building 18's case, this assumption conceals ambiguity in the stratigraphy: it is entirely possible that the two oven sequences in Building 18 ran in tandem. We will see in coming chapters that more dynamic and variable cooking arrangements are strongly suggested—even in some cases confirmed—by the unit-level stratigraphic evidence in many houses, but have been 'written out' of the data through phasing.

There are more systemic challenges for phased histories of buildings. They are coarse: in order to represent the history of an early 7th millennium Çatalhöyük house without conflating features into the same phase that were really sequential, one would need about 3.5 times as many phases as are actually assigned to the buildings in question (Kay 2014). In many cases there is no documentation of why stratigraphically-disconnected features were phased one way or another, and as the process is largely unsystematic this can be hard to deduce. And there is little way—in a phased matrix or indeed any Harris matrix—to account for duration, for the fact that some deposits (most notably compound floor layers excavated as one but comprised of many thin washes) form over an extended period (Chadwick 2003). Finally, phased narratives tend to present a linear, step-by-step history of a house. There is little room for the rich interplay of duration and interaction that we mean when we say two things are *contemporary* (Lucas 2015). Short-term aspects of a space can be contextualized within long-term ones, or may trigger or end them. Drawn-out processes can partially overlap in time or butt up against one another. Capturing this is essential to understanding how the many layers, features and active qualities of Çatalhöyük houses added up to an emergent whole.

These shortcomings can be addressed in a range of ways. Specialist analyses at a fine scale, like micromorphology and mortuary taphonomy, have greatly enriched our understanding of the way floors formed over time and the way burial practices penetrated houses' surfaces at different tempos (Haddow et al. 2016; Matthews 2005a, 2012). Although such fine-grained study is not possible to carry out across an entire house, strategic interventions can help to clarify unclear dynamics of space, and may even reveal dynamics invisible to the naked eye (Matthews 2005b). Several authors (Cessford 2005e; Stevanović 2012b) have attempted to draw out duration and contemporaneity by tracing features' insistence—and even buried individuals' estimated lives—across phases (e.g. Figure 3.9).

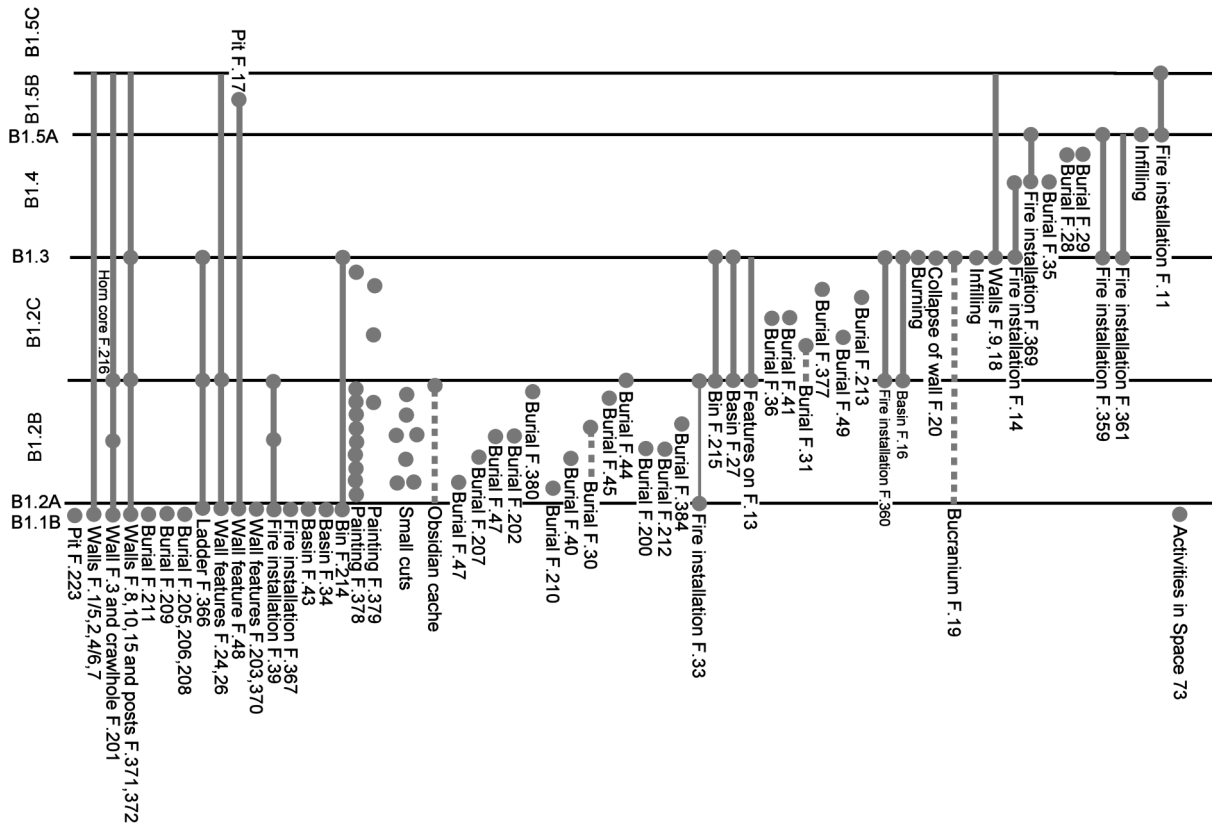


Figure 3.9. Cessford's (2005e, fig. 13.3) visualization of features through the phases of Building 1. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

Ultimately, however, a method to capture material politics benefits from grappling with time more systematically and in as much detail as possible. At Çatalhöyük the finely-layered nature of domestic space and the fine-grained excavation carried out since the 1990s means we can push beyond a few step-by-step phases, and even beyond targeted interventions to add fine detail, to draw out politics in a new way. This means revisiting the Harris matrix and developing new methods for synthesizing information about time, space, and the material.

3.4.3 A note on absolute chronology

The discussion above highlights how archaeologists have worked with *relative* chronology at Çatalhöyük. But what can we say about *absolute* lengths of time within these sequences based on the present articulation of materials in our trenches? This is a further challenge for a material political approach that sets high prize by process and trajectory. If we see a series of twists and turns a house's biography took, how long did each one last? How long was any

house's biography as a whole? These questions engage a different set of analytic challenges.

The obvious starting point for absolute chronology is radiocarbon dating. The Hodder excavations have incorporated two major radiocarbon dating programmes. The former, led by Craig Cessford (2005a), established several general contours of the site's chronology: that an average Çatalhöyük house stood for about 50-80 years; that there was significant variation around this mean, with some buildings standing for over 100 years; that early 7th millennium building-levels lasted slightly longer than later ones on average. A second radiocarbon and Bayesian modelling project led by Alex Bayliss has since set out to provide extremely high precision building-by-building dates, eschewing the need for the arbitrary device of 'levels' (Bayliss 2013). This programme aims to date the foundation and demolition of every building studied to within a half-century window or better (i.e., ± 25 years), with some stratigraphically well-constrained structures dated even more finely. Results from the beginning and end of the East Mound sequence have come to publication in recent years (Bayliss et al. 2015; Marciniak et al. 2015a), but the publication of the central part of the sequence—including all buildings discussed in this thesis—remains forthcoming. The published results from the late 7th millennium suggest that there was even more variation in building lifespans and tempos of architectural modification than Cessford's data suggested. Arguably, citing an average longevity obscures the reality that buildings' durations were multimodally distributed, some very long-lived and some lasting only a few years (Marciniak et al. 2015a). However, it is currently unclear to what extent this characterizes the whole sequence, and to what extent it is a particular trait of late 7th millennium spatial politics (see Chapter 6). Preliminary results for parts of the main Çatalhöyük sequence have been shared internally within the Çatalhöyük project; I have been asked not to share details of these here, but can suggest that what new radiocarbon results are available (in preliminary form) do not straightforwardly contradict the characterization of any buildings discussed here.

Even highly precise radiocarbon dates will never reveal all of the meaningful durations and tempos of space-making that we will investigate in this thesis. However, there are other ways to estimate durations in the Çatalhöyük record. Extensive micromorphological study juxtaposed against radiocarbon data shows that floors and walls were replastered roughly once per year, with thinner seasonal washes (Cessford 2005b; Matthews 2005b). In this way, plaster layer counts can work as a proxy for the passing of time: if two paintings in a series of wall surfaces are separated by three thick plasters and several thin ones, it is likely that three years elapsed between them. However, this seemingly ideal trait has limitations. Thin plaster layers are often difficult to distinguish with the naked eye, and rarely possible to excavate one-by-one; excavators typically excavate several floor or wall layers as a

compound unit, and often simply record that a unit comprises 'several' or 'many' layers. Individual layers may be discontinuous due to localized wear and weathering, meaning that counts made in micromorphology sections vary based on the exact location a block is taken from.

In this thesis, I proceed from the understanding that most Çatalhöyük houses were multi-generation structures, occupied for several decades, except where microstratigraphy or other traits suggest otherwise. For example, two of the late 7th millennium houses that I explore in Chapter 6 have notably thin floor plasters and brief sequences of modification and burial, all of which points to short occupation. Whether this means five years or fifteen is likely undeterminable, although good radiocarbon modelling may soon suggest which end of that range is more likely. In a similar manner, although I will not report precise plaster counts as a basis for real-time determination, I will sometimes refer to the thickness or length of the stratigraphic sequence between two events as a rough estimate, e.g. 'a large number of plaster layers were laid between the last burial in the house and its demolition' or 'only one plaster layer intervened between the closing of one oven and the construction of another'. The only more substantial use of plaster counts will be in estimating the relative timing of events in long stratigraphic 'branches' away from the main sequence of a building, when no better information is available (see below). In circumstances where my central interpretations of a house (or details within) rest on such tentative evidence, I will be careful to note the attendant uncertainty in the text or as footnotes. By working pragmatically with the evidence available, I will provide plausible renderings of Çatalhöyük houses' biographies in both relative and absolute time, with honest admission of the limitations of the approach.

3.4.4 Developing relative timelines

The discussion above sets goalposts for a house biography methodology at Çatalhöyük. To make the most of Çatalhöyük's remarkable record, we need ways to work with layered-on changes in space that (1) grapple with the full sequential detail of Çatalhöyük stratigraphy, rather than conflating complex temporal relationships into a few flattened phases; (2) that stitch together a full picture of a house, rather than leaving stratigraphic branches disconnected (as a Harris matrix does); and (3) that work more systematically through ambiguities in the relationship between synchronic and sequential views of the house. Although delimiting the real-time duration of houses' lives and tracing more complex kinds of contemporaneity and duration through the phases of houses are important steps in this direction, in this thesis I build on recent work that provides a more nuanced approach to the site's stratigraphy.

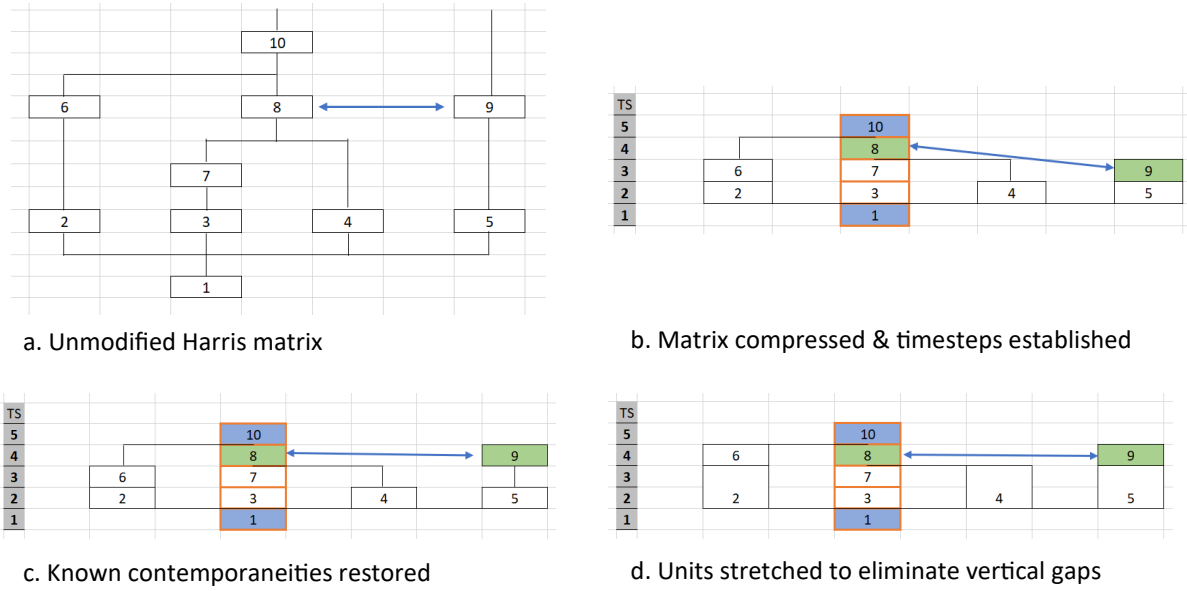


Figure 3.10. The stages of Taylor's (et al. 2015) method for producing a relative timeline.

James Taylor (et al. 2015; 2016b), building on conceptual work by Lucas (2001; 2004) and Chadwick (2003), has developed a methodology for using the Harris matrix as a backbone for high-resolution house biographies. His work is oriented toward integrating stratigraphic information with the Çatalhöyük GIS database (Taylor 2016b). The challenges in that task are much the same as the ones I identify above: it requires that one fully represent the sequential insights of the Harris matrix, while also allowing the production of 'freeze-frame' representations of the spatial relationship among features. In order to do this, Taylor has developed a system whereby the matrix is compressed, stretched, and skewed onto a grid. The rows on this grid form a long series of 'timesteps' based on the finest stratigraphic information available (Figure 3.10). The resulting representation of a house's biography is called a *relative timeline*.

The relative timeline forms the backbone for my work with Çatalhöyük house biographies. In adapting it to my purposes, I have added some additional steps and guidelines to the process. Here I follow the workflow step-by-step, using the matrix of Building 18's kitchen area as illustration.

Preprocessing

The Harris Matrices from the site are compiled in Microsoft Excel. Each stratigraphic unit is represented by a unit number in a spreadsheet cell, with stratigraphic relationships, phase lines, and other annotations drawn over the top (Figure 3.8 above). These have been secured from the site publications' CD supplements (Hodder (Ed) 2005; 2013); unpublished matrices from the most

recent years were shared with me by field directors Burcu Tung and James Taylor, and reflect the postexcavation understanding of the structures as of August 2018.

Stage 1: Compression (Taylor's Stage 1)
The matrix is compressed vertically, so that units in direct stratigraphic relationship are placed in immediately adjacent rows in the spreadsheet (Figure 3.11). This is done unit by unit, starting from the bottom. While compressing the matrix, I review each unit's record sheet, field sketch, and GIS polygon, and revise the unit-level annotations in the matrix with relevant information about the nature and location of each unit (e.g., from simply 'Structure' to 'Oven structure – F.501 (SW)' for unit U.4592, at the bottom of the right branch). At the end of Stage 1, a timeline is inserted in the first column of the spreadsheet, enumerating the timesteps from bottom to top.

Stage 2: Colour annotations
A matrix composed of unit identifying numbers with brief descriptions can be difficult to read quickly. Annotating the matrix with a simple colour scheme both aids the user in remaining oriented within the spreadsheet, and can help to identify or clarify difficult stratigraphy. I have found it useful to mark the following in my matrices (Appendix A):

- Units known or suggested to be contemporary with one another (see Stage 3). These are marked in green in my timelines (and connected with black arrows).

- 'Extensive' units, like plaster floors and packed ash, that represent surfaces for movement and that may have accumulated over an extended time (see stage 4). These are marked in blue in my timelines.

- Major truncations. Occasionally, people at Çatalhöyük scoured the floor plasters from parts of the house mid-sequence. This creates confusing stratigraphy, intermingling discontinuous earlier and later deposits. Where major scouring is evident, I have reviewed the field documentation and photographic evidence to parse the sequence of events, sometimes coming to a different understanding than the excavators. In my timelines, major scouring events are coloured red.

- The stratigraphic 'spine', that is, the longest continuous sequence of units from bottom to top of the matrix. This spine does not contain vertical gaps after stage 1, and forms the steady backbone for the manipulation of the matrix in stage 4. Units in the spine are outlined with a thick orange line in my timelines.

Stage 3: Re-establish known contemporaneities (Taylor's Stage 2)
Sometimes in the field extensive deposits are excavated across different years or in different tranches, and receive different unit numbers with different stratigraphic relations noted for each. Other contexts may be reasonably inferred to be contemporary regardless of their stratigraphic disconnectedness: for example, clusters of artefacts left on the final floors in different parts of a building. Vertically compressing the matrix (stage 1) can place such units in different timesteps, if they fall on different branches of the matrix. For example, in Figure 3.11, the different walls of Building 18 are situated in different timesteps despite being bonded to one another. Having marked these units in orange (stage 2), in this stage they are shifted up and down on the matrix's branches to situate them in the same timestep, moving all units above or below them as necessary (Figure 3.12).

Stage 4: Stretch units to fit
Finally, vertical gaps in the matrix are filled by stretching units across multiple timesteps (Figure 3.13). Sometimes this is an unambiguous process, as when Unit 4534 (a patch of floor plasters near the top-left of the matrix) is stretched from TS17 through TS19, because it sits directly atop a unit in the spine at TS16 and below another unit in the spine at TS20. More ambiguous cases occur in branches away from the stratigraphic spine of the matrix, where multiple units could be stretched to fill the gap. For example, the sequence of units U.4538 and U.4536/4537 (top left) must span TS16 through TS19, because they are linked to the timeline's spine above and below, but within those parameters either or both units could be stretched across several timesteps.

Which units are stretched, and how much, can greatly affect the modelled sequence as units' position relative to other events in the house shift around. In these cases, I have followed these principles as closely as possible.

- Stretching 'extensive' units (especially compound floor layers) is preferred, rather than units representing short-term events such as feature construction or digging.

- Excavators' counts of the plaster layers in compound floor units provide rough estimates of the relative duration of floors. For example, given two floor units to stretch, if the excavators record a naked-eye count of eight plaster layers in the first unit, and four in the second, then the first unit would be stretched to encompass twice as many timesteps as the second.
- Sequences of events on top of a floor (e.g. burials) are considered to represent timesteps across which the floor is being 'stretched'. Thus I

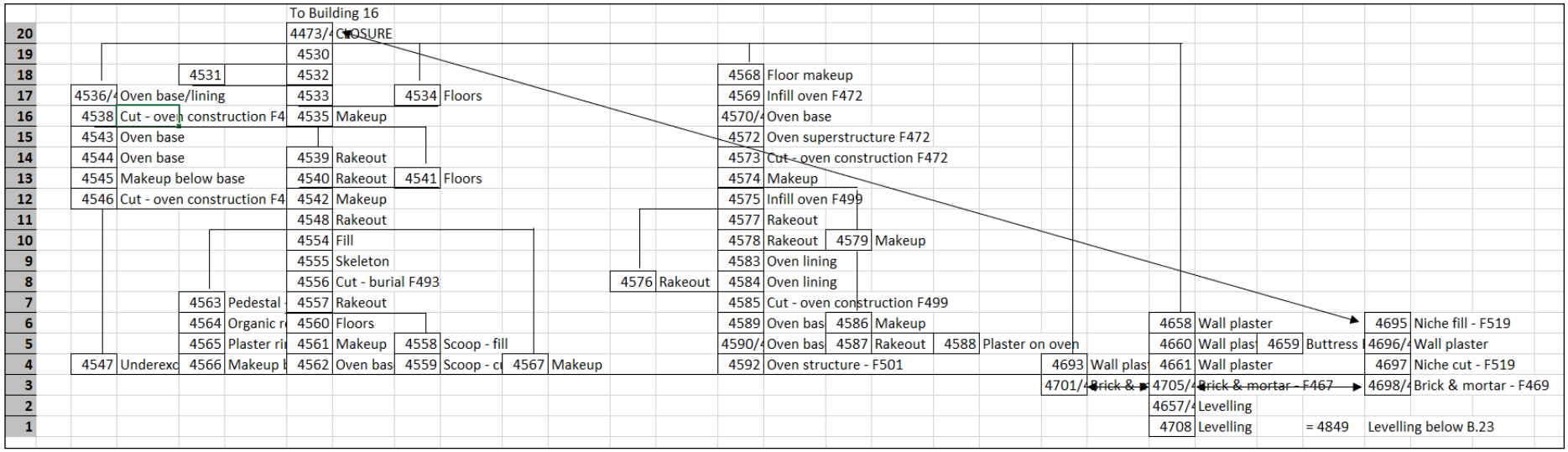


Figure 3.11. Building 18's Harris matrix after stage 1.

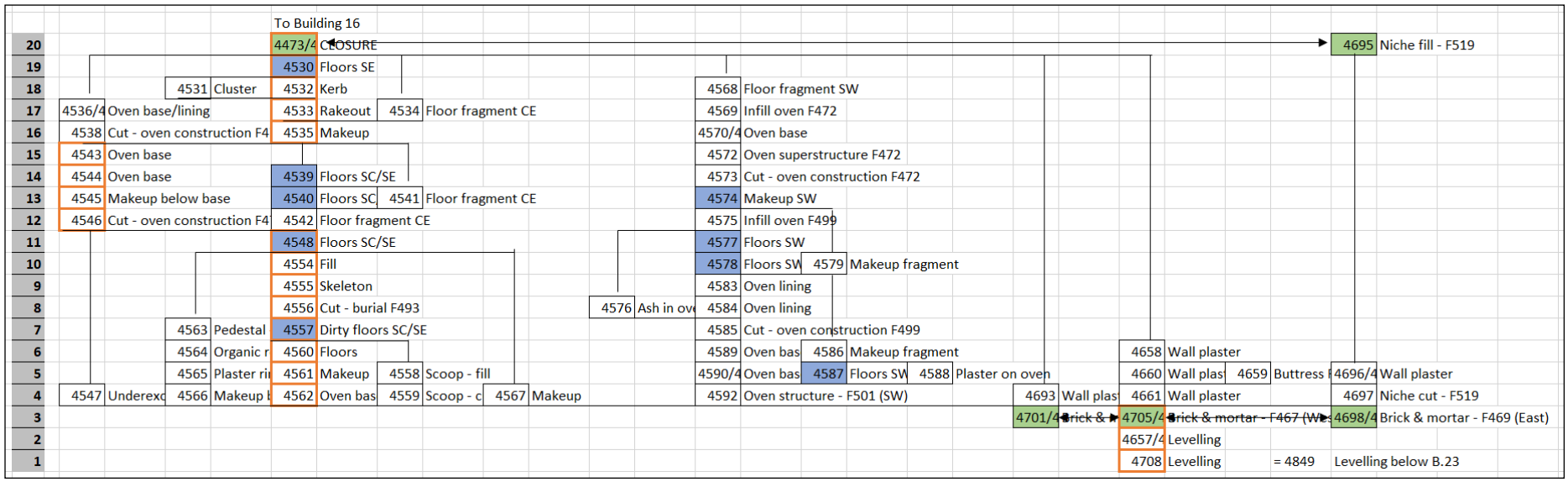


Figure 3.12. Building 18's Harris matrix after stages 2 & 3.

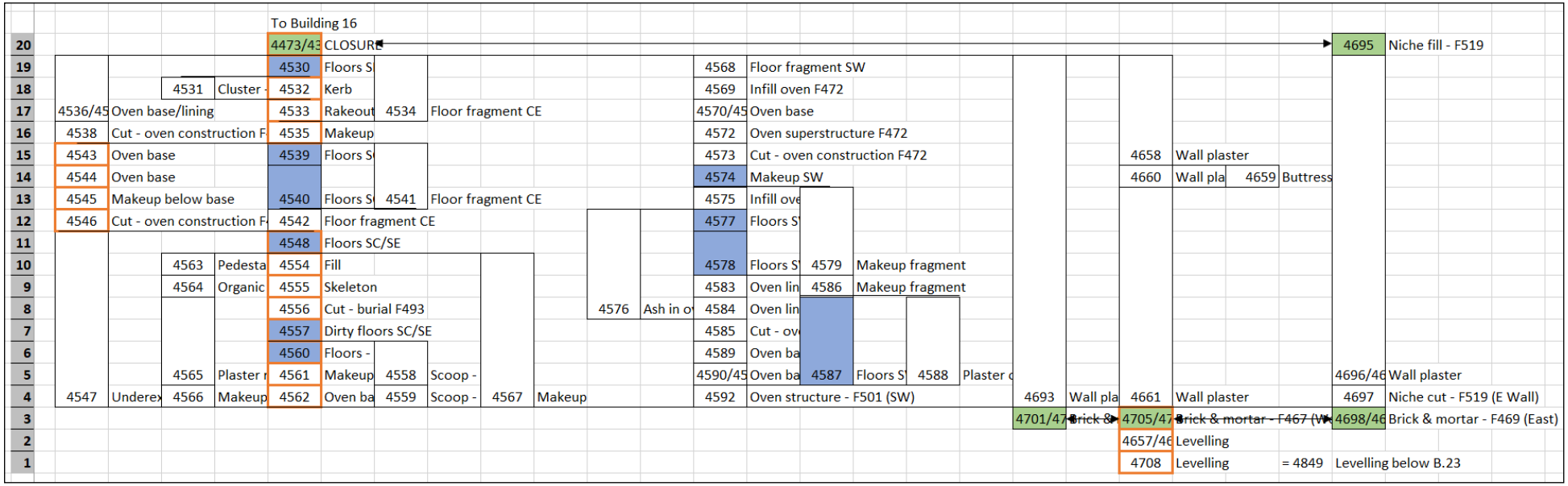


Figure 3.13. Building 18's final relative timeline (see Appendix A.2 for spreadsheet file, in which text annotations can be read without truncation).

consider a floor with a burial through it (3 units: cut, skeleton, and fill) to be stretched across four timesteps for the purposes of (2) above.

- Finally, other information is sought to support or challenge my interpretation. I consider the events populating the 'spine' of the building. If a long span of timesteps in the spine is populated with short-lived events, e.g. the digging of a grave, inhumation of a body and infilling of the grave in TS8-10, it may be more plausible to stretch units in branches across these timesteps as these timesteps certainly represent a short real-time span. Equally, in handling longer branches I compare my interpretation with the conventional phasing of the building, not with a view to copying the phasing but as a way to seek 'push-back' and indicate discrepancies that may be products of overlooked information (producing adjustments of my sequence) or that represent genuine differences between two methods (which can be useful information).

3.4.5 Working with relative timelines

Examining the relative timeline of Building 18's kitchen area, we can see that it meets the criteria that I laid out above better than either phasing or a purely matrix-based approach. The full stratigraphic resolution of the Harris matrix is preserved here. Small details that were ambiguous in the phased representation of the house, such as the fact that the clay ball cluster U.4531 (top left) is overlain by the final floors and therefore not a building closure deposit (unlike most clusters assigned to final occupation phases) are here clear. Yet equally, the timestep device allows us to think about what the house was like at particular moments: what kind of social dynamics worked through Building 18 at TS9, before the bin F.496 was turned into a pedestal, and how did they differ in TS10 or TS15? Finally, we can see that the ambiguity produced by the two branches of the sequence is here more systematically managed. In lieu of clear stratigraphic evidence for a hiatus in either the southwest or south-central oven sequence, the relative timeline does not attempt to imagine a one-oven-at-a-time norm, but presents the two sequences more straightforwardly in parallel. As we will see in Chapter 6 (§6.5), similar situations are very common in early 7th millennium houses: to read them as one-oven (or even one-kitchen) houses requires inserting numerous hiatuses and sequential relationships between features for which no evidence was observed in the field. Although the precise timing of events between the two sequences is not secure, the manner in which this reading has been derived—e.g. by stretching the compound floor unit U.4578, the previously least-stretched floor in the area—is systematic and transparent. We can imagine stretching other units, for example, to produce alternative readings within the confines of the stratigraphic evidence at hand.

On the other hand, relative timelines should be read with care. Two points warrant consideration here. Firstly, although the sequence of timesteps looks much like a real-time

timeline, the actual duration of timesteps is not fixed. Timesteps are established by stratigraphic events in the spine of the matrix, which vary in real time from minutes (e.g. digging a small pit) to months or even years (e.g. compound floor layers). It would therefore be inappropriate to argue, for example, that oven F.495 in Building 18 was longer lived than oven F.473, on the basis that the former occupies seven timesteps and the latter only four. Where real-time durations are essential to understanding a sequence, it is necessary to enlist other lines of evidence, like radiocarbon, mortuary taphonomy or plaster layers, to constrain our estimates (see §3.4.3 above).

Secondly, although relative timelines are systematic in estimating the contemporaneity of events on different stratigraphic branches, such estimations vary in certainty. Among events that are closely linked by stratigraphic connections, the order of events will be effectively secure. Events at many stratigraphic degrees of separation are more tenuously situated relative to one another in the timeline. It is entirely plausible, for example, that oven F.472 (southwest) was built after oven F.473, contrary to the sequence represented here, as no stratigraphic evidence precludes that reading. And it is unclear exactly when the buttress F.504 (at right) was added to the building; all that can be said is that it post-dates thick plasters built up on the western wall, but is sealed by the later plasters on the same wall. I have very roughly placed its construction about 2/3 of the way through the sequence, but would hesitate to draw any conclusions about its contemporaneity with other features. These examples help to illustrate the range of ambiguities, from minor details to major uncertainties, that can occur in the process of creating a relative timeline, and some of the rougher ways of estimating contemporaneity that go into the picture of houses' biographies presented in this thesis.

These two caveats do not undermine the relative timeline as a tool for thinking through space-making action, but they warrant careful interpretation. The main remedy to both is simple: interpret information derived from the relative timeline with reference to the actual stratigraphy. Where there are major ambiguities or where real-time durations are important, I will take care to note the stratigraphic basis of my interpretation, either in text or in footnotes. It is also important to direct interpretation toward the strengths of the relative timeline method. My interpretations in this thesis only rarely rely on precise confluences of events across entire buildings (and I make note of the stratigraphic evidence at hand when they do). Instead, I rely on robust patterns that emerge from buildings' biographies. For example, we can compellingly argue that Building 18's oven sequences likely ran at the same time, given that both start with ovens built on the structure's foundation levelling and continue without hiatus until its closure (south-central) or just before its final floors (southwest).

Despite its limitations, the relative timeline synthesizes biographical information about Çatalhöyük houses with greater clarity and transparency than other methods. The method forms the background of my analysis in this thesis. Most of the relative timelines I draw on are presented in Appendix A, rather than the main text. Instead, I will use intermediary methods to pull information out of relative timelines, creating more streamlined and intuitive basis for analysis. I turn to these now.

3.4.6 Tracing features' active registers

The main analytic approach in this thesis begins from the relative timeline, and pulls information from them to analyse the house as an assemblage of politically active features (§3.3.4). To mediate between the relative timeline and the ways data is presented in the main text, I begin with the concept of features' active registers, as described above (§3.3.2). Through what timesteps were features insistent in a space? Were they active primarily through an intensive phase of formation, or was their understated formation followed by a long phase of insistence? After they were embedded below the surface, did they rest there undisturbed or were they re-exposed or truncated? It is possible to trace each feature's biography through the stratigraphy of a Çatalhöyük house, and to relate these activities to one another through the relative timeline.

Once the relative timeline for a building is complete, I have queried the site database to produce a list of features in the house. I have extended this list by reviewing the relative timeline for features that never received a feature number in the excavation process. This is especially common for fragmentarily preserved features, ephemeral firespots, and artefact clusters: some are documented as stratigraphic units, others are recorded as finds within broader units, while others still are designated as features, based on excavators' differing sensibilities. To be more holistic, I have given overlooked features a designation. In the text and appendices, those features' designations begin 99____ or 77____, with the remainder made up of a unit number associated with the feature (e.g. clay ball cluster U.4531 becomes feature 994531). This extended list of features in a house has then been entered into an MS Access database (Figure 3.14).

There is a tradeoff on the printed page between representing space and time; it is difficult to represent the full spatiality of features as well as tracing their biographies on a timeline. Given my focus on time and process I have privileged time with the clearest representation. For spatial control, I have divided each house's floor plan into a number of segments based

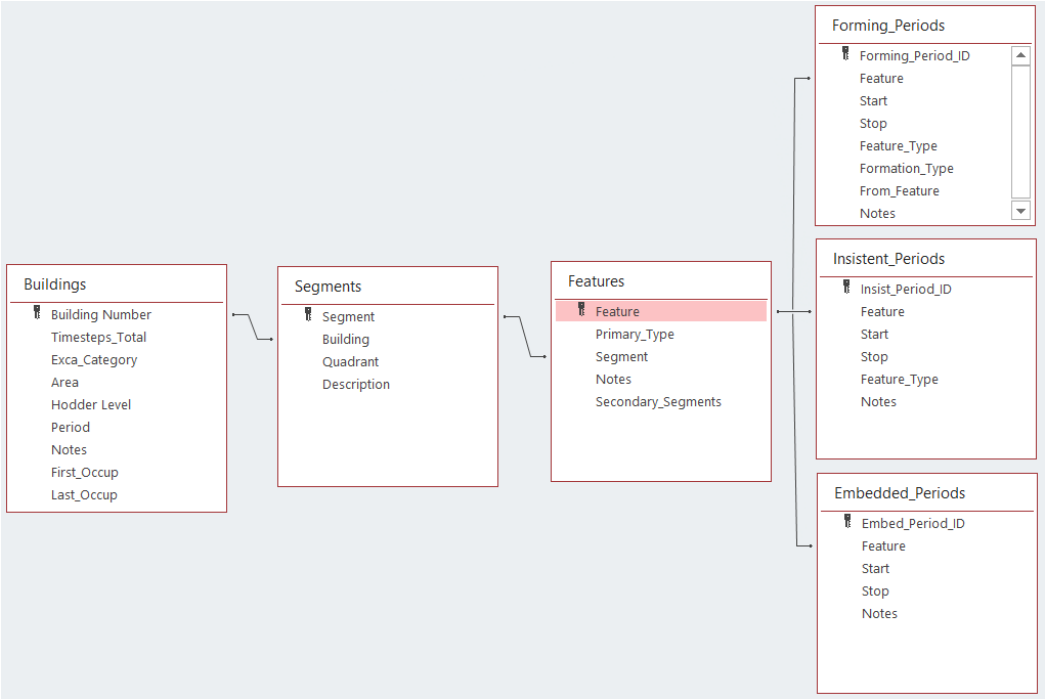


Figure 3.14. Architecture of the Access database used to store feature-level data.

on boundaries that emerged through the life of a space. Usually, these represent about 1-2m^2 of floor space. For example, Building 18's kitchen area I divide into three segments: southwest (1801), south-central (1802) and southeast (1803), each roughly 2m^2 (Figure 3.16). Features are assigned to a segment, and the full timelines presented in the main text are structured by segment to preserve some spatial detail.

I have assigned each feature a primary type, shown in Table 3.1 grouped into nine broad genres. These are based on the designations given to features in the field at Çatalhöyük, although I have created subtypes to highlight salient differences between features and in some specific cases adjusted designations based on my understanding of the record (e.g. a broad, shallow plaster-lined scoop with a rim may be designated 'scoop' by excavators, but I would class it as a 'basin'). Further ambiguity in designations will be discussed on a case-by-case basis as necessary.

I have then recorded the timesteps over which each feature was active on each of the first three registers in §3.3.2 (formation, insistence, and embedding). For example, bin F.496 begins life with construction in TS5; the unit representing its construction is stretched across TS5-8. There is an organic residue sealed inside of it, occupying TS9. Then packing material, including the bin's former superstructure, was compacted into the feature (TS10) and later floors sloped up and over the feature to form a pedestal, which lasted until the building's closure in TS20. For this feature, I would attribute five periods of activity:

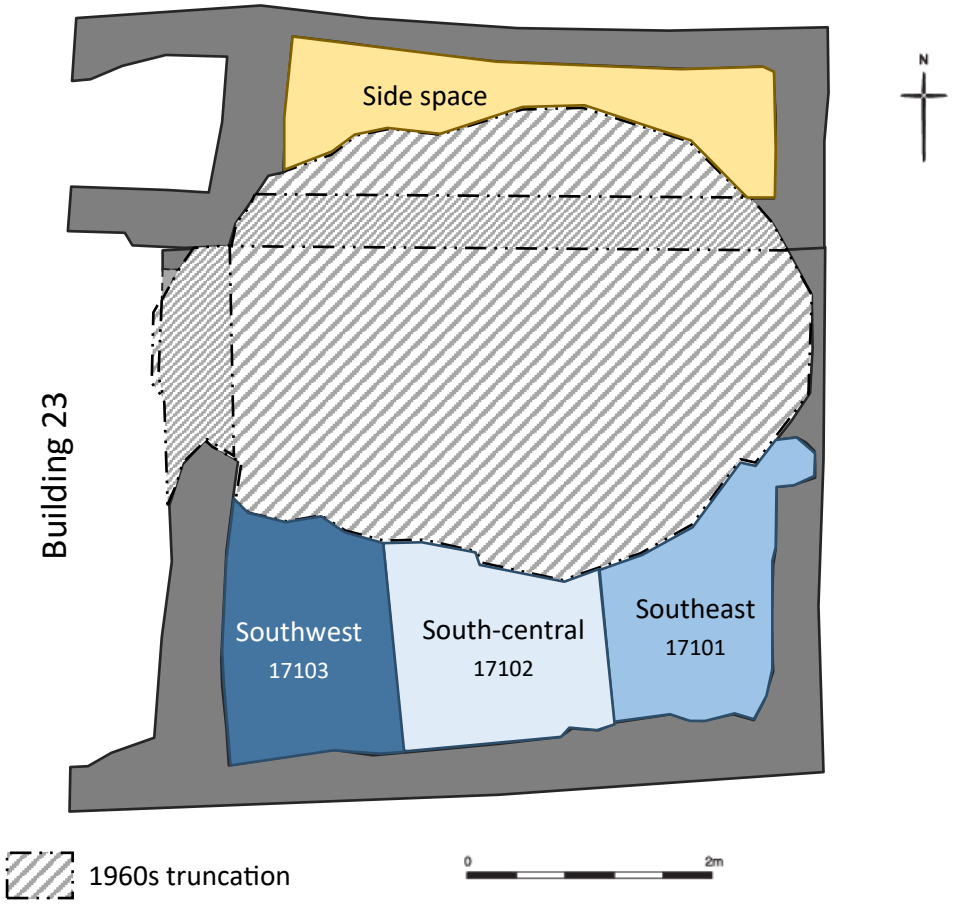


Figure 3.15. Plan of Building 18, showing designation of spatial segments. Redrawn and modified from Farid (2005c, fig. 5.16).

Formation period (as a bin):	TS5 – TS8
Formation period (conversion to pedestal):	TS10 – TS10
Insistent period (as a bin):	TS5 – TS9
Insistent period (as a pedestal):	TS10 – TS19
Embedded period:	TS5 – TS200 (200: 'until present')

This example captures several aspects of the way I have understood features' action. Features begin insisting, and are embedded in emergent phenomena, from the moment they begin forming. Every feature, therefore, acts on all three registers. Features that were only briefly present and active at the surface, such as burials and embedding acts, will have identical formation and insistent periods: during the time when they insisted distinctively in the space, they were rapidly transforming. Other features, like walls, will have insisted long after they took their initial form. Secondly, intensive formation only captures major transformations of features. Pedestal F.496's form did change over the course of its life as it weathered and was resurfaced, but I have not designated a period of intensive formation for

FEATURE TYPES		
Human Burial	**Pillars, Posts, Screens**	**Elaborations**
• Burial_Adol • Burial_Adult • Burial_Double • Burial_Inf • Burial_Inf_Basket • Burial_Inf_Retrieved • Burial_Juv • Burial_Multiple	• Pillar • Post • Post_Bench • Post_Detached • Post_Faux • Post_Partition • Screen_Wall • Triple_Post_Feature • Wall • Wall_Blocking • Wall_Retaining	• Decoration_Truncated • Inlaid_Animal • Niche • Ornamental_Pillar • Painting_Incised • Pot • Sculpture_Wall • Sculpture_Wall_Embedding
Passageways	**Fire Installations**	**Pits & Embedding**
• Crawlhole • Ladder • Ladder_Platform • Ladder_Step • Pit_Ladder • Threshold	• Firespot • Hearth • Oven	• Pit • Pit_Ash • Pit_Embedding • Pit_Embedding_Human • Pit_Embedding_Postpit • Pit_Open • Pit_Postpit • Pit_Postpit_Embedding • Pit_Potspot • Pit_Retrieval • Pit_Retrieval_Embedding • Pit_Unexcavated • Scoop • Scouring • Surface_Embedding • Surface_Embedding_Human
Kerbs, Benches, Platforms	**Storage & Processing**	
• Bench • Bench_Ledge • Kerb • Platform • Platform_Edge_Moulding • Ridge	• Basin • Basin_Double • Bin • Bin_Double • Bin_Skinny • Bin_Triple • Inlaid_Quern • Pedestal	

Table 3.1. Feature types used in this thesis. Definitions are given in Appendix B.2.

each one (see also the hearth biography in Figure 3.6 above). There is an element of discretion in this judgment: in theory, every little change of form, even a simple resurfacing or a scratch, engages some of the active potential of the material that I discuss under the banner of 'formation' above. And in some cases it is important to recognize these moments, e.g. when F.496 was converted into a low pedestal. But for clarity, I have only given features multiple periods of formation when there is a substantial change in their relational capacities, meaning most features only have one formative period in the beginning of their lives.

The capacity of features to act through translation is absent from this framework. This does not mean that translations are overlooked in this thesis. However, the ways material features act in the world at a distance from themselves through human minds and bodies are not well-defined through the study of stratigraphy. Where coming chapters follow specific typologies, memories and other knowledge through the 7th millennium, the methods will rest more on contextual analyses (described as they arise) than on the details of relative timelines.

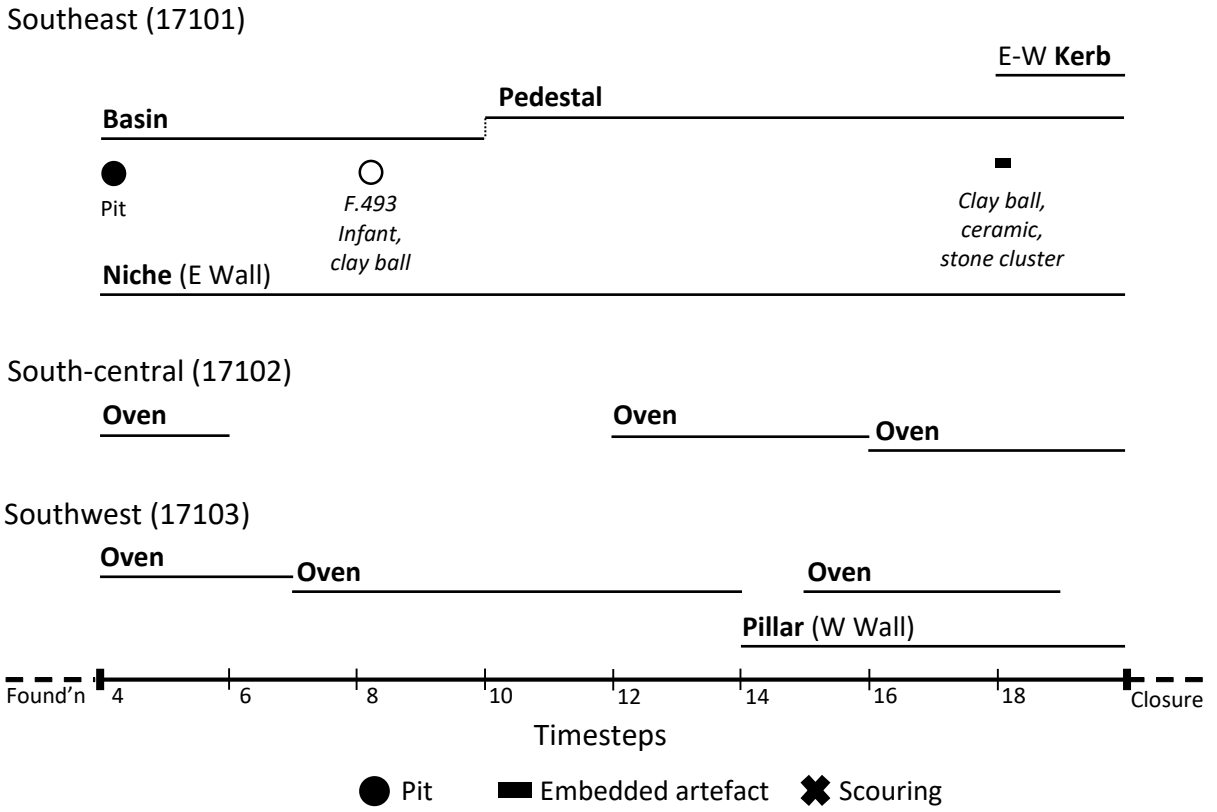
3.4.7 Assembling feature-level data

Once the active registers of all of a building's features have been recorded, I visualize the data using bespoke code in the R statistical environment. The 'Timegrid' function creates a grid in an Excel spreadsheet, with each column representing a timestep in the specified building's relative timeline (i.e., timesteps run horizontally left to right). The function then creates a row for each feature in the building, recording a 1 in each timestep where the building is active on the specified register and a 0 in every other register. Identifying data is recorded to the side (feature numbers, types, segments). By shading the cells marked '1', features appear as lines on a timeline, showing the changing assemblage of features over a building's life.

These grids are powerful tools for studying a house's biography. They can be sorted, for example by segment or feature type, and queries and calculations can be performed to count e.g. the number of bins or hearths in a house as this changed over time, or the changing degree of visual elaboration in a space (Kay 2020). When presenting overall timelines for a space, for clarity I trace over the grid and organize and annotate it for clarity and readability, for example by putting superimposed features' lines next to one another (Figure 3.16). The traced versions presented in text condense information from the three registers' grids: short-lived features like burials or artefact clusters are shown as marks at the first timestep of their formation; longer lived features have lines drawn showing the length of their insistence; and features with highly indeterminate timing, like repeated wall paintings, are sketched in with dotted lines. The result is a legible overview, in an image or two, of the flow of space-making practice and changing materiality of a Çatalhöyük house over its biography, capturing the shifting assemblage of active features through which a house became bound up in communities.

3.5 Conclusion: following communities, following time

Who did a Çatalhöyük house hold? Was each the domain of a single group of people acting in solid unity? Were people slotted into houses by larger corporate institutions governing many structures? Or was the site populated by 'Neolithic monkeys', acting at random to embed a bone here, rebuild a wall there? All of these questions have a particular vision of the 'who' in the question: human or human-like, defined by their positions in collective institutions, possessive of the house and fixed in their place, one way or another. In this picture of prehistoric society, human mortality, the fragility of interpersonal bonds, the material deterioration of walls and roofs, the insistence of piling-up ash or rising floor, all



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W
1	Feature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	Segment	IPeriodsB$Feature_Type	
2	472	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	17103	Oven	
3	473	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	17102	Oven	
4	477	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	17102	Oven	
5	493	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17101	Burial_Inf	
6	495	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17102	Oven	
7	496	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17101	Basin	
8	499	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	17103	Oven	
9	501	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17103	Oven	
10	504	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	17103	Pillar	
11	519	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	17101	Niche	
12	94532	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	17101	Kerb	
13	994531	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	17101	Surface_Embedding	
14	994559	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17102	Pit	
15	994563	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	17101	Pedestal	
16																							

Figure 3.16. Timeline. Features in the southern kitchen area of Building 18. Below: raw output of the 'timegrid' function for Building 18 for the register 'insistence'; I have shaded cells marked '1' ('active') for visibility.

tend to be portrayed as glitches in the status quo, exceptions to the structured human order of a place. By contrast, I have argued that these humble forces of change *are* the structure of prehistoric society. They are not driven solely by humans (or monkeys) but by a much broader range of actors and communities. The question is no longer who a house represents. Instead, we ask what kinds of change houses helped to direct.

At Çatalhöyük we are fortunate to have a remarkably clear record of houses' materiality that provides a robust lens through which to study trajectories of change. Houses' many layers, their shifting assemblages of features and the moments where diverse actors converged in practice all took part in a material politics that extended across the site and beyond. Studying the shape of features' and houses' biographies keys us into these politics in unconventional and transformative ways. The range of conceptual and data-oriented devices I have developed in this chapter all converge in following material politics among the many communities that worked with a house in the Neolithic. A biographical approach to space, along with an understanding of houses as active participants in multiple more-than-human collaborations, opens up prehistoric communities in ways that mannequin 'theys' (households, corporate neighbourhoods, even history houses) standing *behind* the material cannot. To consider this proposition further, and to investigate the range of political entanglements of Çatalhöyük houses, I now turn to explore the full biography of Building 131, a mid-7th millennium structure excavated in full.

Chapter 4

A house of leaves: space-making and politics in Building 131

4.1 Introduction

In *House of Leaves*, Mark Z. Danielewski (2000) tells the story of Will Navidson and Karen Green, filmmakers who move into a house in the Virginia suburbs with their two young children. The house is, at first, unremarkable—except for the nagging detail that it is one-quarter inch larger when measured from the inside than from the outside. As the family attempts to begin their life in the place, new interior dimensions of the house open up: undiscovered closets, dark corridors, chasms. Meanwhile, new characters enter the scene: extended family members, scientists, adventurers, law enforcement; and also cameras, weapons, books, microscopes. As the cast grows, power struggles, gender tensions between Will and Karen and generational friction between adults and children seem to not only shape the group's response to the impossible house, but the architecture of the house itself.

Houses are always bigger than they appear at a glance. An unfortunate aspect of archaeological methods is the tendency to sum up buildings in a handful of representations: a plan or two, measurements of their dimensions, categorization of their shape, quantities of finds or features (Bailey and McFadyen 2010). We expect buildings to add up, to have stable physical and social identities that can shed light on past social structure (§3.2). Like the nagging quarter-inch in the Navidson/Green house, however, closer investigation often sets about multiplying the dimensions of the place and its social relationships.

This chapter explores the political dimensions of a single Çatalhöyük house through close examination the space-making action that constituted it. Using the methods presented in Chapter 3, I develop a detailed biography of Building 131, a roughly typical house of the 66th century, and consider how we might use the social information embedded in this biography to think about community and politics at the site. Arguing against the view that Building 131 materialized a single household, I zoom in on material aspects of the house as they changed through time: the way it supported metabolic activities like food storage and cooking; the way intermittent performances like burial, painting and artefact deposition built up meaningful histories; and the different tempos at which space transformed. These analyses, combined with careful contextual reading of the house's biography, help to define

Figure 4.1. Overview of Building 131, facing northeast. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

four *dimensions of material politics* that guided community life and social action in this particular historical context. In concluding the chapter, I zoom in on Building 131's mudbrick walls and associated space-making activities as a social technology or *field of action*, showing how multiple communities were interwoven through the building's material and structured through the process of spatial change. Taken together, these explorations reveal new forms of complexity in the politics of community as it was carried out through Çatalhöyük houses.

4.2 Building 131

Relative timeline: Appendix A.3. Excavation reports: Tripković (2017); Tung (2014c, 2016); Tung and Mickel (2015).

Building 131 (Figure 4.1) is a large Çatalhöyük house of level North G, which largely dates to the 66th century BCE (see Table 2.1). It was excavated between 2014 and 2017, achieving a full sequence from construction through its closure by controlled burning. Building 131 was built atop an earlier, somewhat smaller Building 139, which has been excavated to its final layout only, and after Building 131 a later Building 124 was built on the same footprint,

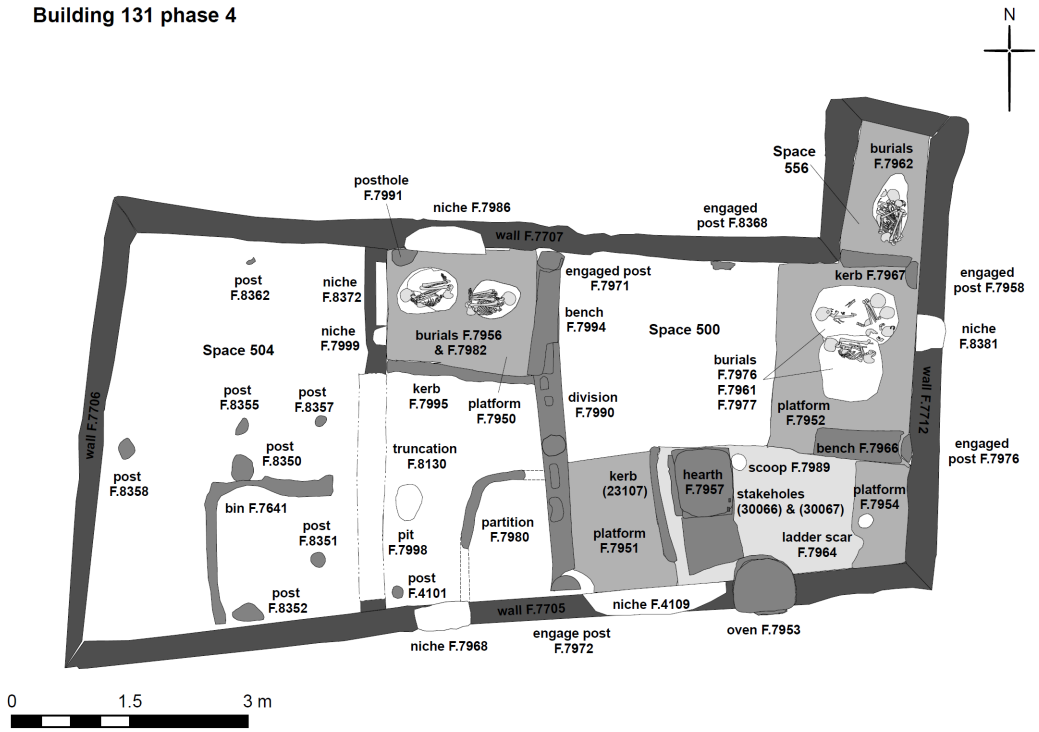


Figure 4.2. Plan of Building 131 in a late excavator-defined phase. Plan by Camilla Mazzucato, used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

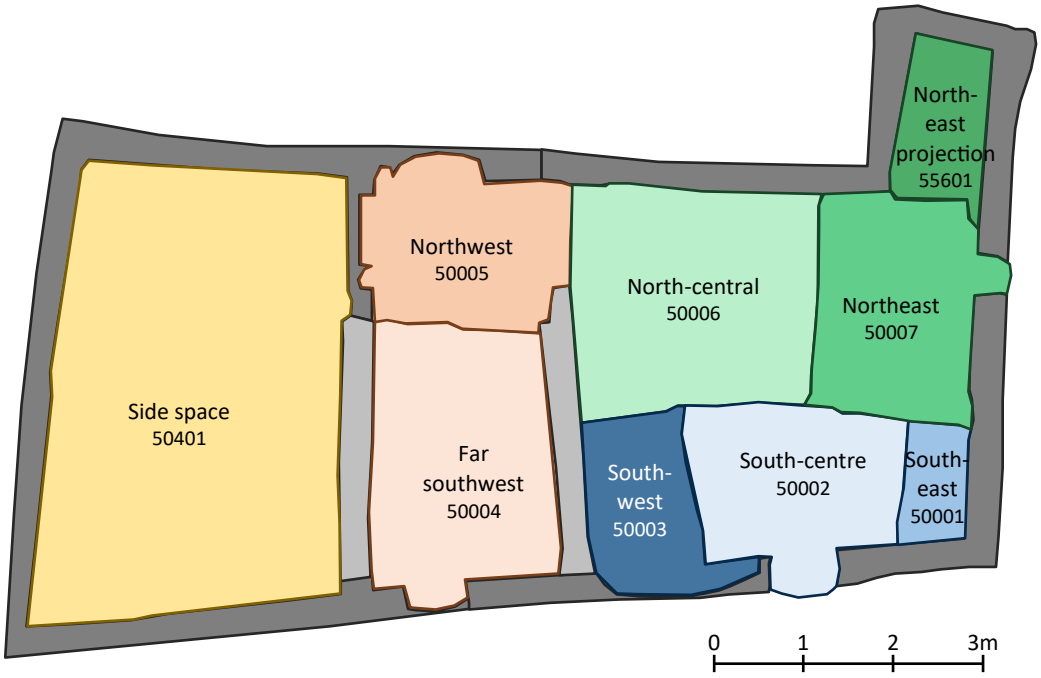


Figure 4.3. Segments defined in Building 131.

surviving as foundation layers and sub-floor burials just below the 21st century topsoil.

Building 131's interior was divided into a number of segments using ridges, platforms and partitions. Its layout was somewhat unusually divided into three clear sections with partitions between: a main space, Sp.500, divided in two by a wood-and-plaster screen, as well as a western side space (Sp.504) accessed through a mud-brick internal wall (Figure 4.2). A small projection in the northeast corner is labelled Sp.556. In its final iteration, raised platforms stood in the northwest and northeast corners, the northeastern projection, as well as on the southern wall east of the wooden screen. Ovens and/or hearths were placed in the western side space, the far southwest and in the south-centre. Based on divisions that were made over the course of the building's life, I have divided its plan into nine segments for spatial control in the following discussion, graphs and appendices (Figure 4.3).

In postexcavation, the history of Building 131 was divided into five phases with several further subphases (Tung forthcoming). This captures a somewhat different history of the space than that derived from the Taylor method (see §3.4.2). Most notably, as in Building 18 (Chapter 3) the phasing decided by excavators for Building 131 assigns one oven to each phase, starting from the west and moving east, such that there are never two kitchens in the building simultaneously. But there is no stratigraphic evidence of a delay preceding the early kitchens in either the far southwest or south-centre of Sp.500, and the Taylor method renders three cooking areas at the outset of the building's occupation (side space; far southwest; and south-central).

The Taylor method produces a series of 54 timesteps for the structure. Of these, TS1-25 are preparatory, construction and furnishing activities before the first floors[1]; TS26-51 represent occupation; and TS52-54 comprise pre-closure deposition, infilling, burning and demolition. As Building 131 was excavated by different teams focusing on different parts of the space each year, there are fewer cross-cutting stratigraphic links constraining the structure of this matrix than in buildings excavated in a more integrated process (e.g. Buildings 49, 59, and 77 in the next chapter). Four branches in the matrix, representing the eastern platforms, the remainder of the main room, the two segments beyond the screen wall, and the side space, have few stratigraphic links between them. This makes assessing precise contemporaneities across these divides impossible. Nevertheless, by exploring these sequences in full stratigraphic detail new details of the process of space-making that constituted the building's biography emerge.

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[1] I have included the infill process of Building 139 and pre-construction interventions near Building 139's east wall in the matrix (see §4.6)

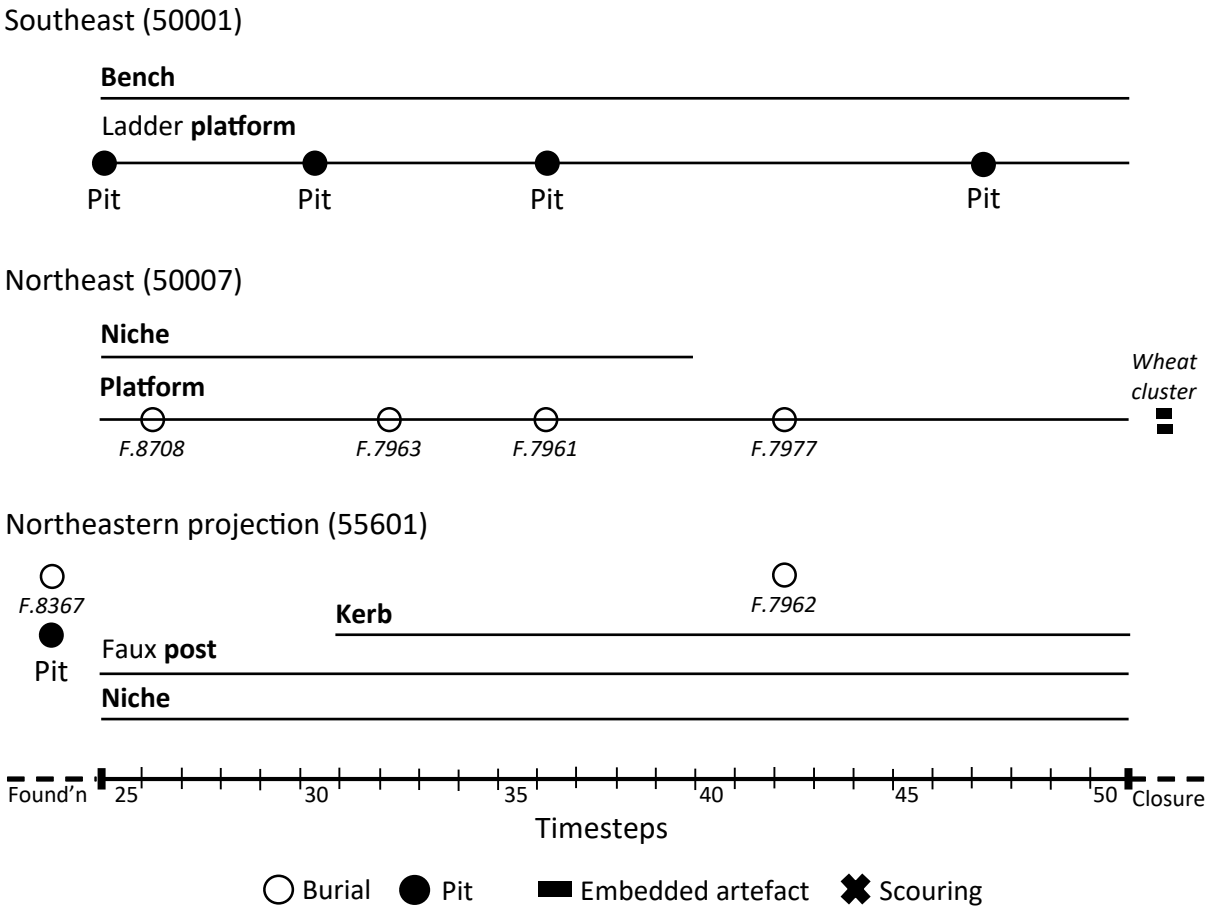


Figure 4.4. Timeline. Features in the east of Building 131

The foundations of Building 131 involved a complex mix of trenches, levelling deposits, artefact deposits and human burials. These are discussed in more detail later (§4.6), but in short, include remains of seven individuals buried along the north wall and wooden partition, in the southwest platform core and in the foundation trench of the northeast projection's walls. Additionally, two pits containing small quantities of animal bone were made near the ladder and in the side space. A pit containing 21 expertly-made obsidian spearhead preforms struck sequentially from the same core was made in the side space; and two obsidian preforms were embedded above one of the foundation burials, near the partition wall. All these deposits were made in tandem with the process of erecting walls and posts, levelling the ground, and forming the platforms and contours of the space.

The eastern platforms (Figure 4.4) were characterized by repeated, often ornate burial and reworking of the ladder entry, amid a general continuity in the arrangement of space. A tall, stubby bench protruding from the eastern wall divided the entry area from the burial platform to the north. At its interface with the wall, this bench contained a large fragment of timber, which may or may not have extended to the ceiling: many of the 'support posts' around the periphery of Building 131 may have been faux posts with their upper parts

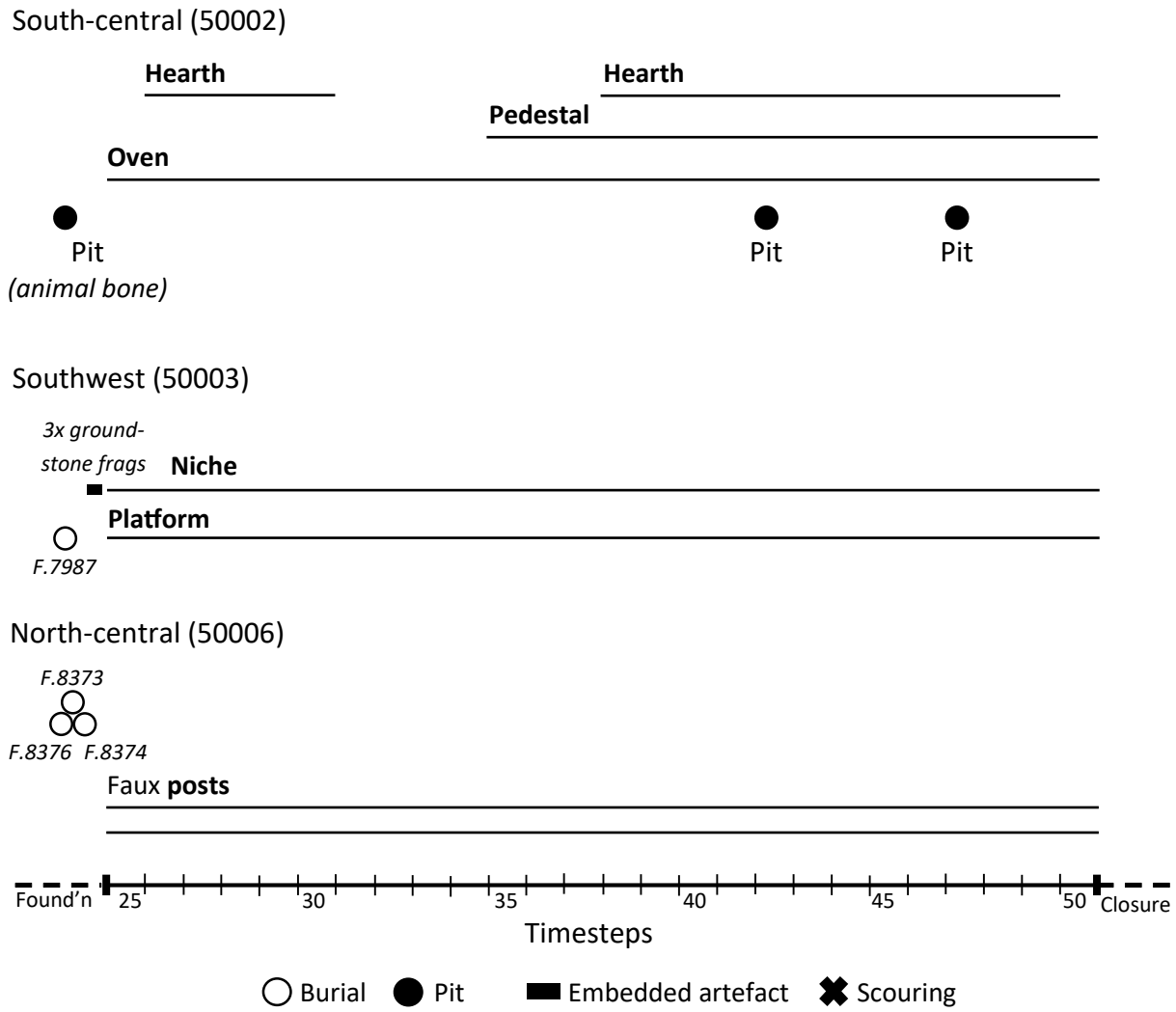


Figure 4.5. Timeline. Features in the main room of Building 131, Sp.500

modelled in clay and small wood slabs at the base (Kabukcu pers. comm.). There is evidence for repeated red painting on this bench and all walls in the eastern part of the room north of the bench, including a possible 'red phase' in the mid-late sequence when the walls were extensively covered in red. Ornate burials occurred repeatedly in the northeastern platform throughout the sequence. The only stratified burial in the northeastern projection, by contrast, occurred just before the final floors in the building were laid. Some caution is warranted: burial in Building 131 was precisely intercut, with later graves almost totally obliterating earlier cuts. It is possible therefore that the sole grave in the northeast projection 'erased' earlier burials in the same location, and that several burial events in the northeast platform were likewise invisible to excavators. Many of the burials in this part of the house contain multiple individuals, including a primary burial and crania (and sometimes subcranial remains) of further individuals; postexcavation taphonomic evaluation will help to clarify the extent to which this represents commingling of earlier with later primary burials, as opposed to secondary burial and cranial curation (cf. Haddow and Knüsel 2017). Whether through grave disturbance, secondary burial, or bone curation, however, there is a

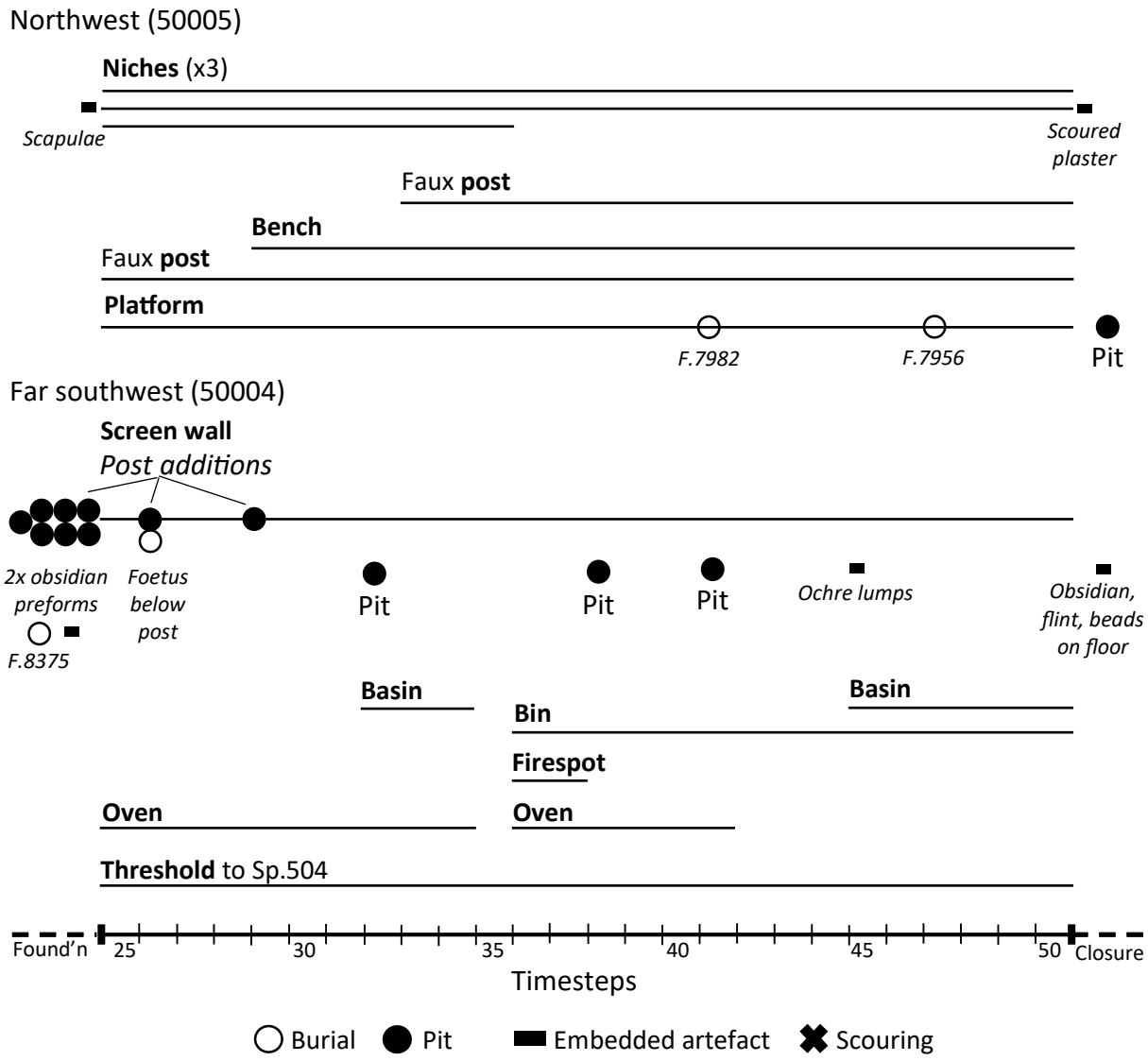


Figure 4.6. Timeline. Features west of the screen wall in Building 131, Sp.500

clear cumulativity to burial in the area over time, as intercutting graves and curated remains situated recently-dead bodies among diverse, longer-dead human remains.

To the west of these platforms were unraised 'clean' plaster floors to the north, and a 'kitchen' area to the south. As noted above, this kitchen is supposed to be a late addition to the space in excavators' phasing of the building; but stratigraphically, the oven sits directly atop the building's foundation packing and there is no reason to imagine a delay. In addition to a large oven cut into the southern wall, the kitchen comprised a hearth to the oven's northwest; this was infilled and a rectangular plinth built, atop which a new hearth was located. To the west, between the hearth and the wood-and-plaster screen wall, a larger platform had a pre-term foetus/neonate embedded in its core at construction. There is little evidence for practices carried out atop this platform.

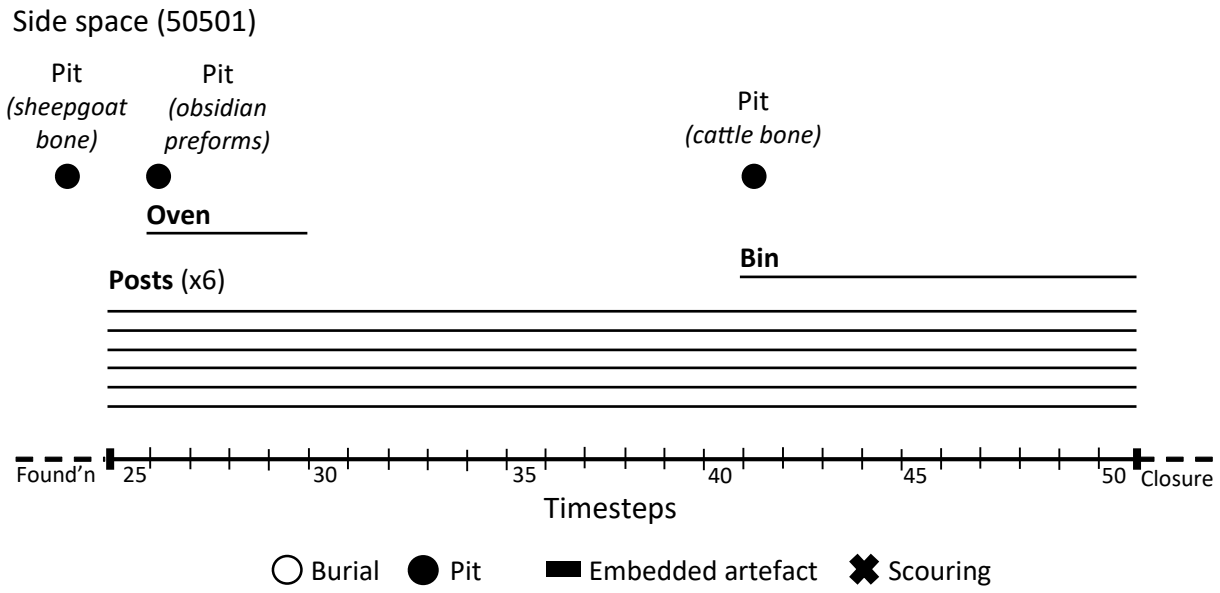


Figure 4.7. Timeline. Features in the side space of Building 131, Sp.504

The screen wall itself was an object of continual renewal, at least through the early part of the house's biography. Stratigraphic evidence securely locates at least two mid-occupation additions of posts to the structure, and excavators suggest that several more of the wooden posts and associated plaster were later additions to the structure (Tripković 2017). A foetus/ neonatal individual was set underneath the first such repair/expansion post.

West of the partition was a 'dirty' area with a shifting ensemble of ovens, ephemeral hearths, plaster-lined basins, and a sizeable bin. Notably, all fire installations in this area were disused well before the building's closure, as the space became more devoted to storage and processing type features. To the north, a platform was raised at construction, bounded by a high kerb on its southern face and a broad bench to the east. Above this platform, in the north wall, was a large niche near floor-level. The sides of the niche were inlaid with two cattle scapulae, but these were plastered over and invisible for most of the feature's use. In the wall of Building 139 directly below this was a crawlhole connecting to the neighbouring building to the north – perhaps indicating a long-term saliency for this specific location. A range of other niches and faux posts populated the northwest corner at various points in the building's history. Late in the building's life, two adult females were buried, one after the other, in adjacent cuts in the northwest platform. Both had wooden bowls placed between their knees and their faces, and one had several strands of beads adorning the body. These burials must have taken place fairly shortly before the building's closure: although floor plaster layers seal their fills, scraps of muscle tissue were preserved by the fire at the building's closure.

The western side space of Building 131 was unusual in several ways (Figure 4.7). Most

striking were the six free-standing posts in the space. Unlike the 'faux' posts around the periphery of the main room, the side room's posts may have been structural elements. Unusually for a side space, this room had a fire installation (likely a domed oven) cut into its eastern wall at the beginning of its life. Later, this oven was disused and badly truncated, and a large bin was installed in the southeastern corner of the room.

At closure, Building 131 was thoroughly cleaned out. Several clusters of items were left on the final floor, including concentrations of wheat on the eastern platforms and bead jewellery and chipped stone left in a basin in the southwest corner. The building was then burned, with the fire concentrated especially in the western half and southeastern corner. After the fire, the structure was demolished, and likely rebuilt as Building 124 soon thereafter.

4.3 Who was Building 131's household?

There are well-established ways to learn about Çatalhöyük society from a building like Building 131, many of which were outlined in previous chapters. The first step in most of them is to define Building 131 as a domestic unit, and to investigate it as a reflection of the qualities of a Çatalhöyük household. From this starting point, we could begin to build up information about a single group of people at the site. The building had, at maximum, 5.4m^2 of storage bin area, supplemented by 12.5m^2 of additional side-space area in which portable baskets or skins could have been kept. Ethnographically, this is consistent with the amount of storage space used by 'traditional' Middle Eastern agricultural households (Bogaard et al. 2009). The pits with animal bone in the foundations of the house perhaps reflecting waste from small-scale feasts among perhaps two to ten builders (cf. Demirergi et al. 2014). Parts of 42 dead individuals buried in Building 131, well over the site median MNI of 8.5 among buildings excavated through their floor sequences, but not so many as in Building 1 to the north (MNI: 60 individuals)[2]. The majority of these were isolated crania or other disarticulated bones. Some of the ca. 15 primary burials suggest that the structure was either the residence of, or important to, persons of special prominence: this is a natural reading, for example, of a young adult female buried with lavish jewellery, four different colours of pigment, a wooden bowl, several loose crania and an obsidian periscope (a handheld mirror that does not reflect the user's image back, but reflects perfectly clear images at an angle). Likewise, Building 131 contains remarkable quantities of wood, in the form of actual posts, stubs of wood in 'faux' posts, and as wooden artefacts in graves. This exceeds the amount of

[2] Building statistics like MNI and side space area were calculated from the most recent data as of 11.2017 by Camilla Mazzucato for the Çatalhöyük Research Project.

wood even in other burned/waterlogged buildings at the site. Perhaps the structure was home to people specializing in woodworking, as contemporary structures have been suggested to specialize in groundstone production (Wright 2014) or beadmaking (Bains et al. 2013, 343–346).

Overall, this is consistent with the established understanding of Çatalhöyük as 'a society built of distinct but mutually entangled households . . . with smaller groups interacting more frequently than larger ones, and the entire site socializing together rarely' (Demirergi et al. 2014, 108). Subsistence activities seem scaled to a small group, without clear evidence for dependency on other spaces, nor for accumulation beyond a 'normal surplus' (Bogaard et al. 2009; Bogaard 2017). Yet the house may have been part of farther reaching practice: ritual, exchange, and specialized economies. Perhaps these were special roles that the household in Building 131 pursued in order to centre the house in a competitive arena of history-making (Hodder and Pels 2010). Or perhaps the house played roles in a larger corporate agglomeration of households (Düring 2006; Kuijt 2018). There are other possible reconstructions of the politics of Çatalhöyük that we could explore in relation to this one house (e.g. Asouti 2005; Bogaard,Fochesato and Bowles 2019; Buchli 2014; Meskell 2008; Wright 2014). What they share is the conviction that Building 131 keys us into the social qualities of a defined group of people, who associated with other households in ways that were essentially external, occasional, and voluntary.

However, looking more closely at the materiality of Building 131 – including the temporality and change that are embedded in its stratigraphy – leaves me uneasy with this consensus. If the construction of Building 131 truly did establish *a household,* which persisted not just as a notional unit but a practical one through the building's life, then to a great extent the political work of the house was done from the moment it was erected. One might object that it is not just the initial establishment of a house that renders its household as a unit, but ongoing practice within the space that consolidates lives into a social unit (Hastorf 2012, 69; Hodder and Cessford 2004). But it is precisely in these regards that we have the greatest evidence for discontinuity, disunity, and change in Building 131. Although in summary Building 131's food-related features seem tailored to a small group, why would they be split between three separate cooking areas? Were there 'fault lines' within the co-resident community, with different subgroups cooking and eating separately? If so, should we divide our sums of e.g. storage capacity, burials, and finds in three, reflecting three co-resident commensal groups? Or was there a more complex system in place, with residents sharing some aspects of the house and dividing others? And why did this system apparently change through the building's use-life as the side-space oven and western kitchen were decommissioned? The opposite pattern is evident in burials: early in the building's life one burial

platform sufficed, while later new areas were activated for burial, raising further questions about the connection between relations in life and spatiality in death. Did the practitioners or communities responsible for deciding how to bury the dead change over Building 131's use life? Were the dead buried in different platforms part of different social 'units'? Other questions surround the construction and closure circumstances of the building (see below); its role in sustaining buildings in the neighbourhood which lacked storage, cooking, and/or burial capacities (Chapter 5); and the way the building's qualities changed as people were born and died, moved in or out, and generally navigated the messy generational politics with which every society grapples (Chapter 6).

It is difficult to address any of these questions if we let Building 131 stand in, analytically, for a single institutional unit, whether a household or otherwise. This 'slippage between architecture and social structure' (Weismantel 2014, 259) closes off analysis of the dynamics of communities, and downplays the role of those community members (clay layers, ovens, corpses, pigments) that we have direct evidence of in the archaeological record (§3.3). When we instead centre the more-than-human dynamics of community, a variety of lines appear connecting lives into the house, and dividing them from one another once they are inside. And these lines are always liable to change. It becomes difficult to attribute the space's qualities to any one set of people; the range of stakeholders whose lives were meaningfully invested in the space multiplies. The stratigraphy of the house, and every small decision to maintain or modify it, does not reveal a well-established unity, but a field of negotiation—a material politics.

4.4 Building 131 as a medium for community: focused analyses

The history of Building 131 was constituted in a series of transformative moments, tweaks, spans of continuity, use, and gradual accumulation. To follow the political ramifications of this sequence, it can help to filter and focus our information on specific roles the house played or particular qualities of the way it changed. Here I lay out several analyses drawing out specific characteristics of Building 131's biography. These include tools for following:

- Houses' furnishing for vital food-related (*metabolic*) tasks
- Their engagement in *intermittent performative practices and 'history-making'* (artefact deposition; burial; painting; sculpture; and the display of feasting remains)
- The *tempo* at which the building's furnishing changed

The ways of assessing and visualizing changes in Building 131's social roles introduced here will form the basis for exploring houses' biographies in coming chapters. In pursuing specific political dynamics across neighbourhoods and through centuries, Chapters 5 and 6 will expand upon the analyses developed here, introducing further devices to help compare biographies and draw out additional dynamics of space-making. As an interrogation of even this one house, the analyses introduced here are selective, focusing some of houses' social roles and neglecting others. I will not consider, for example, the way crafting material culture like stone tools, ceramics or jewellery defined space, even though the hearths, basins and storage space in Building 131 may equally have supported such roles. Likewise, I have left aside characterization of plastering activity and microscopic lenses of activity residue (Matthews 2005, 2012; Mitrović and Vasić 2013), even though plaster layers provide the central stratigraphic control for the sequence and represent a key indicator of the space's continuous vitality (see §4.6 below). Although far from comprehensive, this section sets out the roots of an approach that draws out material politics at Çatalhöyük, as it shaped this one building and as it operated between multiple houses across time.

4.4.1 Metabolic capacities and features' insistence

Lucas (2016) argues that, if we centre buildings' biographies as analytic objects and decentre the scale of human experience, routine practices of inhabitation appear very much like a metabolism. Key features like ovens, drainage, and storage areas function as organs in a vital flow of energy and matter. Indeed, the similarity is more than metaphorical (Lucas 2013). For the ecclesiastical kitchen Lucas describes, the structure's physical integrity and social role depended on the steady intake of firewood, raw food, and materials for maintenance, and the excretion of cooked food, ash and waste. Examining Çatalhöyük buildings' metabolism can likewise help us to understand the vital processes that connected houses into human lives and more-than-human communities.

The key features in this analysis are plaster bins, lined basins, querns set in floors or basins, open hearths and domed clay ovens. Each helps to clarify different flows of people and materials into and out of the house. Collaboratively produced crops brought in from the fields (Bogaard 2017) could have been stored loosely or in portable containers in side spaces or other out-of-the-way places, but the construction of large, fixed bins represents a longer-term commitment to locating food stores in one particular location—an indication of changing relationships between the built environment and goods in which many people shared a stake. Basins and inset querns situated labour-intensive processing tasks, and may

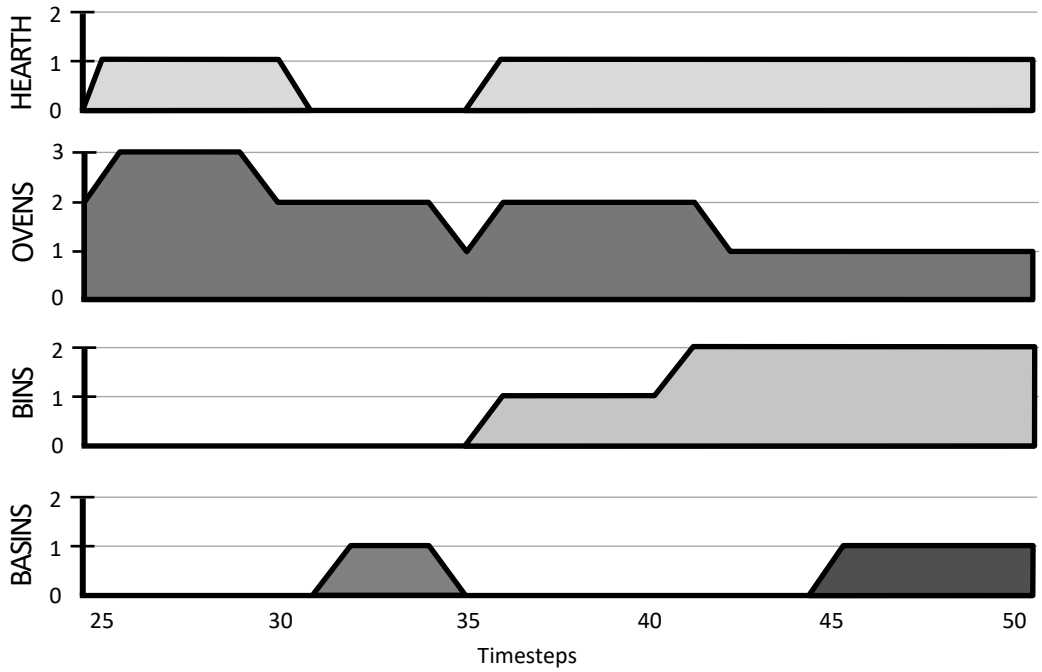


Figure 4.8. Changing assemblage of ovens, hearths, bins, and basins in Building 131.

have been among the busiest locations for daily practice (Green et al. 2014). Established cooking practice up to the 66th century involved rotating clay balls between cooking pots/ skins/baskets and domed clay ovens in a version of 'hot rock' cooking (Atalay and Hastorf 2006). In levels dating to around the 66th century, people began to import ceramics made from heat-resistant fabric, which could be placed directly in an open fire without shattering (Doherty and Tarkan 2013). The diet shifted from a primarily bread-based cuisine with small amounts of roasted or boiled food (centred on ovens), to a more porridge-based cuisine (centred on hearths), with a mix of the two characterizing the 66th century itself (González Carretero,Wollstonecroft and Fuller 2017; González Carretero 2020). Each kind of fire installation thus locates flows of labour, raw foodstuffs, supporting materials (clay balls, imported ceramics) and fuel into a house, and flows of ash and cooked food out of a house.

Changes in the overall assemblage of these features thus reflect changing roles for a house in a broad range of communities, from the set of people who helped to bring in a harvest (and who depended on that same harvest for food security) to people who spent hours processing food in basins. Figure 4.8 zooms in on this assemblage in Building 131[3]. The presence of these features does not guarantee that specific practices were undertaken at any specific tempo (i.e., daily, weekly, seasonally). For example, it is likely that cooking activities were carried out more regularly inside houses in bad weather, while in good summer weather rooftop fire installations may have served as primary cooking features (Matthews 2012).

[3] For concision, moulded hearth features and unstructured firespots are considered together here, and in similar graphs in Chapters 5 and 6

However, where permanent features were located in a house it does indicate a commitment to the house as a potential location for specific practices—and in this regard, there are interesting variations in the way practice and space were linked through time.

Flows of material and bodies through Building 131 changed over time. Consider the difference between a house with three separate oven areas and only portable storage features (early Building 131), and one with a single hearth-and-oven kitchen, a pair of large bins and a basin on the far side of the building (late Building 131). A three-kitchen house implies division of practice, between tasks, people, or times. The ovens could have been used more or less simultaneously for different kinds of fire-related tasks (baking in one kitchen; stewing in another). They could have been used simultaneously by different people (*this* group cooks and eats east of the screen wall, *that* group cooks and eats west of it, even though all share the same roof and ladder). Or perhaps they were used at different times of the year or the month. If either of the former is true, the implication is that there were greater flows of fuel, tinder, and raw food into the house, and greater production of cooked food within it, compared to a one-kitchen house. But at the same time, this situation created a politics of difference in the house: who, when, or for what did the ovens serve?

By contrast, in the later years of Building 131 there is more of a sense of coherence across the building, with fire-related tasks in one area and storage and processing features on the far side of the partition wall. Practices have clear, largely non-redundant centres, and it is possible that this community's needs for, claims to, and/or responsibility for fuel, foodstores and the like were somewhat diminished. Regardless of the uncertainties here, what is clear is that we ought not represent Building 131 as a manifestation of a single kind of community, or characterize foodways as a single kind of political practice in even this one building.

Another way to look at this is to represent the spatiality of practice more explicitly. Figure 4.9 represents specific kinds of feature as 'ribbons' showing how the range of tasks associated with each feature type were divided into different areas, or were centred into single segments. The negotiable nature of domestic practice jumps out: at several points in Building 131's life, spatial changes in the furnishing entailed qualitative changes in the way activities like storing, cooking, and eating food were arranged among the structure's inhabitants. In Chapter 5, we will see that such moments of reconfiguring space had ramifications beyond houses' walls, not only in flows of foodstuffs and fuels, but in the way some spaces depended on others by lacking kitchens, storage areas, or food-processing installations.

The crucial thing to take away from this is that, for all the much-vaunted role of foodways in

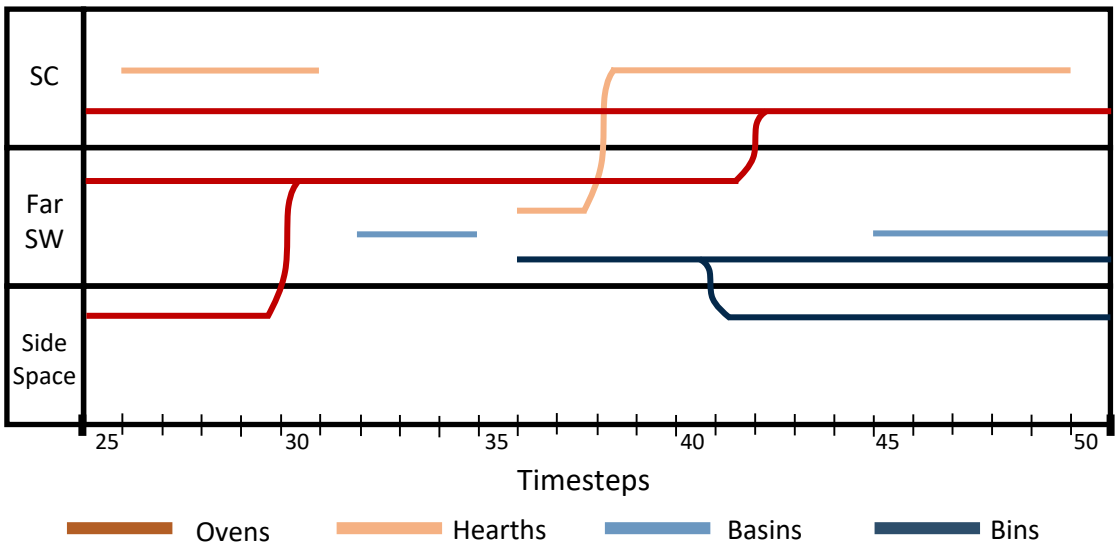


Figure 4.9. Shifting spatiality of daily practice in Building 131.

consolidating communities as social units (e.g. Hastorf 2012; Demirergi et al. 2014), foodways also provided resources for contesting and transforming relationships. Although much remains unspecified, it is easy to imagine the moment Building 131's cooking capacities were consolidated into one compact hearth-oven pair, or the moment its foodstores were formally fixed into place with large bins as opposed to portable containers, as social projects (Robb 2010; §4.6). These moments negotiated the way daily life was carried out, and thus the fabric of the communities that the house materialized. They must have involved some discussion, some understanding of the salient concerns and possible outcomes, no doubt accounting for very specific on-the-ground circumstances (births, deaths, partnerships, break-ups, shortages or surpluses, tensions or hopes) that we can only begin to guess at. That these moments occurred, so far as is archaeologically visible, only a handful of times in the life of the house shows that communities could stay stable for some time in the 66th century; yet it also shows that reconfiguring relationships was a regular part of living together, and an ongoing concern for people to navigate.

4.4.2 Intermittent practices in durable spaces

More intermittent practices, like burying the dead, painting walls and platforms, and depositing artefacts and feasting remains, give us a different entry point to the material politics of Building 131. As I showed in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.6), different kinds of features had biographies of different shapes, and suggest different analytic approaches. Daily metabolic tasks, with their rhythmicity and involvement of features' insistence, lend themselves to visualization as a flow or a strand. By contrast, the practice and materials

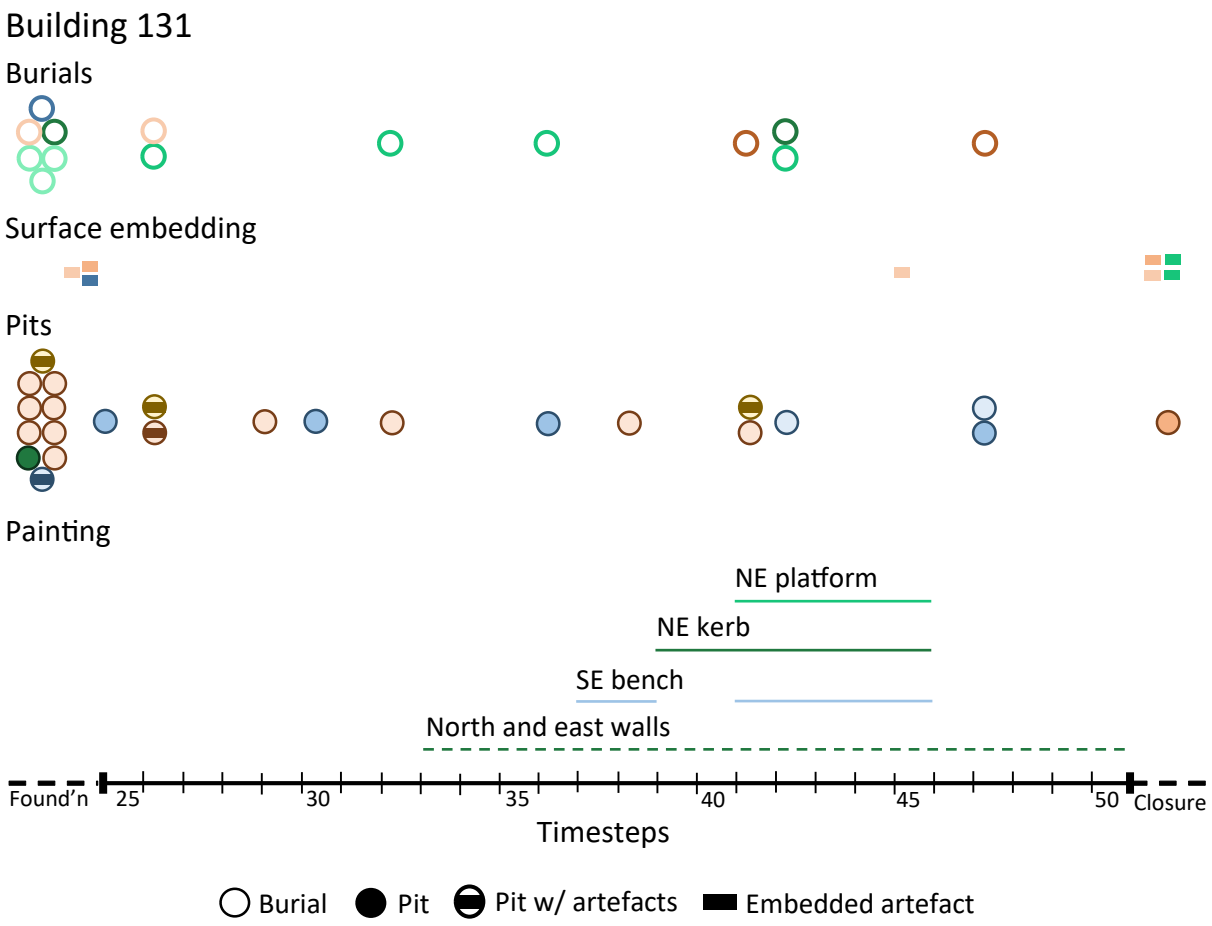


Figure 4.10. Timeline of burials, pits, artefact embedding and painting in Building 131. Colours match segment designations in Fig.4.3.

involved in a burials, painting or feasting only converged on a specific location for a brief time. Graves were infilled and plastered over; paintings endured only until the next wall plastering; feasts dispersed and deposited artefacts slid into the subsurface of the tell. These features acted firstly through moments of intensive formation. But they also became embedded in the space and translated into human memories and relationships, 'layering on' social qualities in the space as they accumulated through time.

Figure 4.10 summarizes the overall pattern of burial, deposition and pit-digging, painting and display in Building 131. This chart is particularly geared toward capturing changing tempos of certain intermittent practices. This analysis has its limits: it bears repeating that equal spans along a relative timeline (say, from TS 30-33, and 36-39) are not necessarily of equal real-time length. Moreover, intercutting graves, wall paintings and truncation of features at closure pose significant stratigraphic challenges: for example some burial events may be 'missing' from the chart due to obliteration by later grave cuts.

With these caveats noted, some strongly-supported inferences, and more tentative

suggestions, can come from this investigation. The majority of practices that saw people digging into, depositing artefacts within, and burying the dead into Building 131 took place at foundation and closure. However, several interesting shifts occurred in the building's occupation as well. Through the first two-thirds of the sequence, burial was carried out repeatedly in the northeast platform, but nowhere else (assuming later graves did not obliterate burials from this period completely). But later in the building's biography, burial was expanded into the northeastern projection and the northwestern platform. The painted phase around the northeastern quarter of the house may have ended around this time, and a niche in the eastern wall was closed (see fig. 4.4)—perhaps further signs of decreasingly singular ritual focus on the eastern platform. This is precisely the opposite pattern as with cooking features: at around the same time as cooking was consolidated into a single hearth-oven pair, burials were made in new areas where none had been previously. Although precisely assessing contemporaneity between different areas in this house is impossible, it is not hard to imagine these as linked dynamics: as the house's array of quotidian relationships changed, the way those relationships could be drawn on to centre the house in ritual practice might change too. Alternatively, we could imagine that a series of deaths changed the circumstances underlying the building's unusual tripartite kitchen arrangement, allowing the survivors to form a more conventional Çatalhöyük living arrangement.

More so than the evidence for daily practice, however, the assemblage of burials and depositions in Building 131 does not comfortably lend itself to a phase-by-phase style of analysis: 'first it was this way, then it was different'. Clear threads of memory and citation connect intermittent acts, even as other aspects of the practices change (Figure 4.11). The burial of a young female with an obsidian periscope and many-coloured pigments was cited years later by a burial in Building 124, directly above the original burial, which contained two obsidian periscopes of similar manufacture (and these are, at the site as a whole, exceptionally rare objects). Equally, I suggested above that the scapula-flanked niche in Building 131 'cited' the crawlhole that existed between Building 139 and its northern neighbour in the same location. Beyond these few, striking citations, there is the more physical process of cumulative meaning that emerged through intercutting burials, as successive bodies created increasing quantities of loose bone that were deposited atop the most recent inhumation, blurring the lines between bodies and grave inclusions and between different burial events (cf. Haddow et al. 2016; Haddow and Knüsel 2017). As memorable events involving a range of materials and people happened, Building 131 took on emergent, lasting social qualities: as a burial house, as an old structure, as a place associated with particular people or particular practices and materials (see further discussion at §5.6). And these qualities, or the potential to create them, conversely informed negotiations around individual burials, deposits, or paintings—and perhaps around metabolic practices, too.

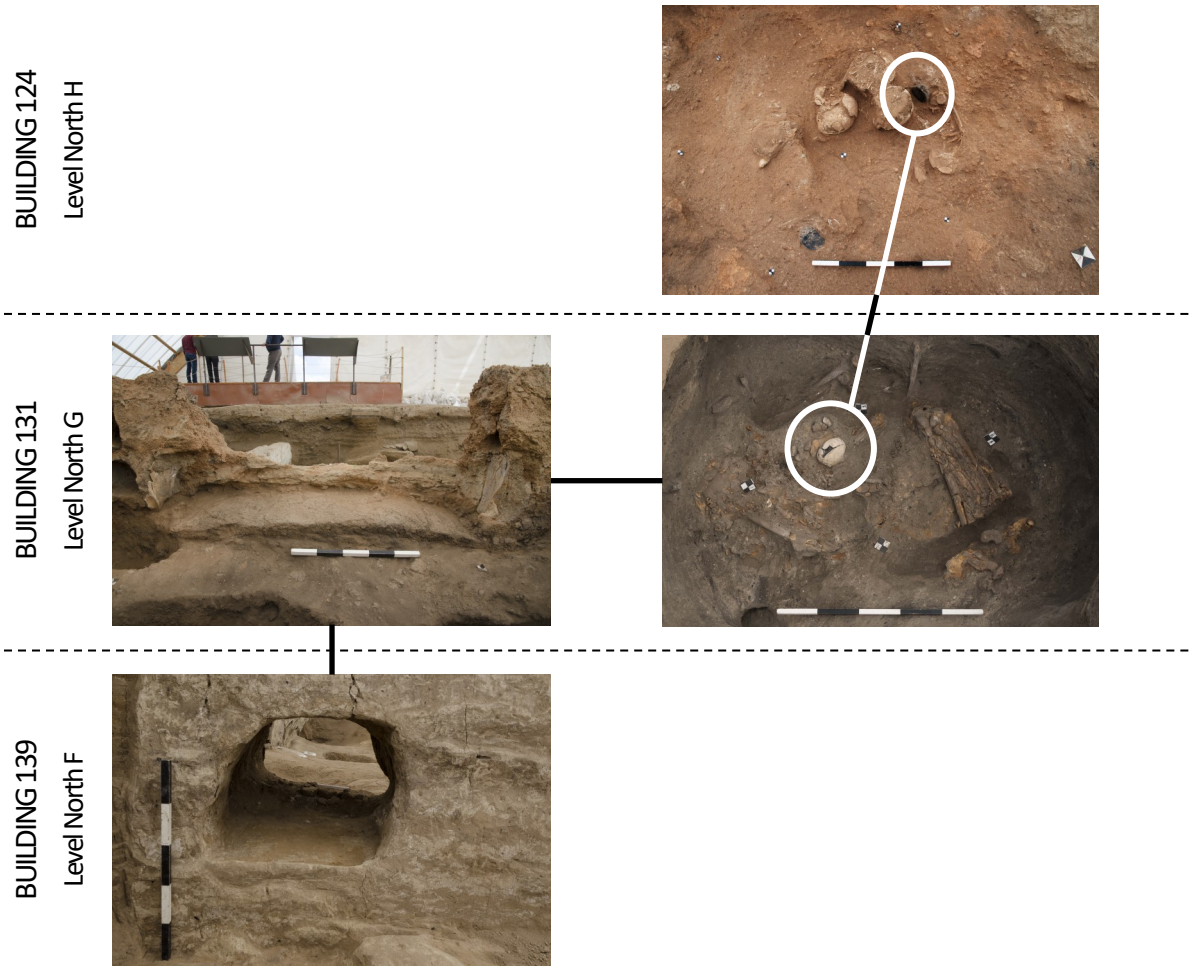


Figure 4.11. Citations linking Building 131 to earlier and later buildings.

4.4.3 Tempo and (in)stability

The tempo of changes tells us about the manner in which the ongoing negotiation of space was carried out. Small, steady tweaks produced significant cumulative changes in the work a house could do—and the communities it participated in—without clear pivotal moments where the house was redesigned in an overarching way. It was possible for space to take shape as small changes subtly shifted the flow of specific practices: adding a bin to change the house's role in food storage, or making a niche in the wall to allow for a small display of important objects. Although such tweaks might have had substantial knock-on effects, they do not seem to have immediately impacted other kinds of space-making practice.

By contrast, major transitions required the tacit consensus, if not active participation, of many stakeholders in the house. I describe one such moment in detail below, when I consider the range of communities that were stitched through Building 131 as its foundations were first created (§4.6). In a short span of time, Building 131 recruited bodies from broad communities, involved specialists in obsidian and perhaps woodworking to produce

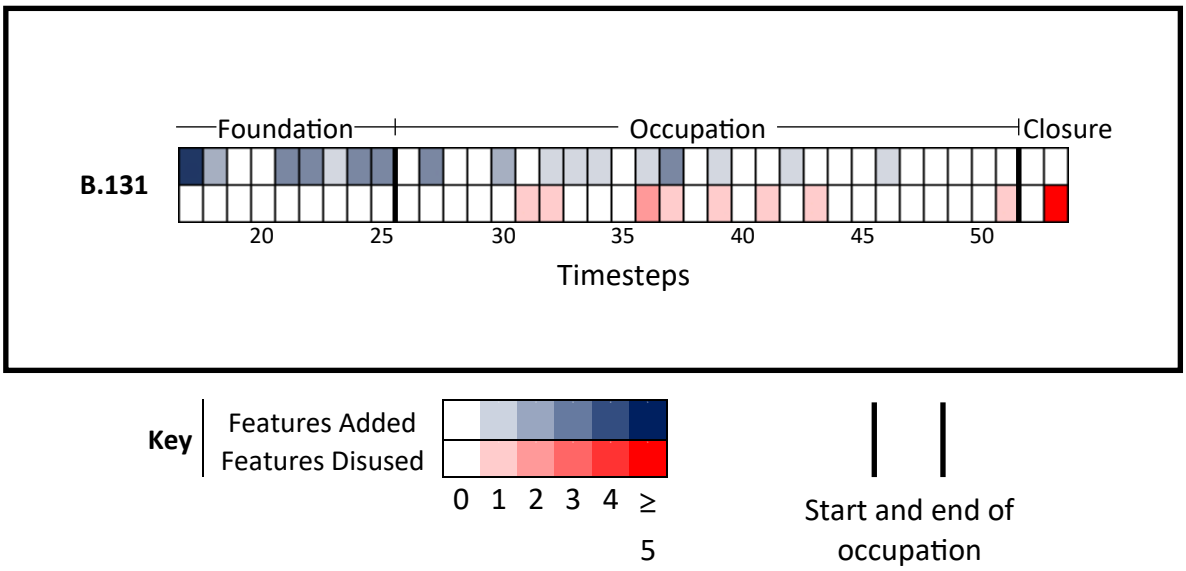


Figure 4.12. Tempos of change in Building 131.

deposited artefacts, generated substantial traffic across neighbouring buildings, and reconfigured movement, access, and working patterns on the local roofscape and in open areas. Although the process may have spread over weeks or months, and there may not have been one definitive moment where all decisions were worked out, it is difficult to imagine such a rapid rearrangement of life in the North Area occurring without explicit conversation, argument, and consensus-building. Major transitions like this likely activated different political modes and considerations than smaller tweaks, many of which may have impacted only a handful of people in the short term.

Figure 4.12 provides a rough metric of the tempo of change across Building 131's use life. The blue line shows the number of surface features (excluding pits, graves, and artefact embedding) added to the building's ensemble of furnishings at each timestep. The red line shows the number of surface features that were truncated, infilled or otherwise disused. This graph does not capture the true intensity of some changes, because the relative timeline method often 'splits' transformations (e.g. feature construction) across multiple timesteps and 'lumps' periods of continuity (e.g. compound floor layers) into a few. However, a few contours of the space's dynamics jump out.

The most obvious features of Figure 4.12 are also the most immediately understandable: there is a peak in the addition of features during construction, and a peak in their removal when the house is demolished at the end of the sequence. In virtually all houses we will encounter in this thesis, these will be the most dramatic periods of spatial change. However, within the building's use-life, there are different dynamics as well. Most of the changes in Building 131's furnishing were small, gradual ones: tweaks, not overhauls, most evidently

affecting one or two aspects of the space at a time. There is one exception: timesteps 36-37 comprise the creation or truncation of seven surface features. These timesteps capture substantial reconfiguration of the far southwest kitchen, including relocating the oven into the southern wall, infilling a basin, constructing a bin in the corner, and using a short-lived firespot. TS36-37 also cover the highly visible though less dramatic transformation of the south-central kitchen by installing a raised plinth with a new hearth atop it. Lack of stratigraphic connection makes it questionable whether these two segments' transformations truly happened contemporaneously, as the relative timeline suggests, but it is plausible. In either case, the stratigraphy suggests that Building 131's role as a juncture of several communities, anchored in different practices and involving diverse human and material participants, was significantly shifted midway through its occupation. The bin, for example, was integral to harvest-time taskscapes that may have involved labour pooling, as well as overwinter management of food reserves; fixing storage in place meant shifting from more portable facilities (or other houses) into a more persistent location firmly associated with the new oven. Meanwhile, filling-in a basin may have relocated grinding tasks or provided for them to be done with portable equipment in shifting locations. Even if we cannot capture the exact human impact of all this, we can note how many more lives, practices and situations (storing up a harvest, cooking an evening meal, weathering a famine) were rearticulated in TS36-37 than in some of the more minor tweaks in the building's life.

Though coarse, this information helps us to characterize the dynamics of Building 131 as a nexus of community. Neither the house nor its practices were fixed and unchanging; but change was largely effected in small increments. Some of these small changes may in fact have been highly impactful projects; for example, the ramifications of reducing a two-kitchen building to have only one could include combining work-groups that previously were separate, moving a set of cooks and/or diners out to another location, or otherwise changing the local economy of dung fuel, food, labour and sharing. However, at least once during Building 131's life, the rhythm of life in the place was significantly reworked in short order. The array of lives and dynamics tied into such a house changed gradually, for the most part, but were also able to be transformed in more punctuated events cross-cutting multiple vectors of community.

4.5 Dimensions of material politics at Çatalhöyük

The analyses above begin defining just some of the roles that Building 131 played in more-than-human communities in the 66th century. We will never be able to fully understand this in a quasi-ethnographic sense; but by looking at a range of tempos, features, and specific

moments, we can start to discern common themes or dimensions of the material politics that operated through Building 131. Here I name four that will guide discussion through this thesis, some of which come through clearly in the biography of Building 131, and others that are more subtle here but come to the foreground when I examine a wider range of houses from a wider span of the site's history.

Whereas the analytic concepts I have developed thus far have been broadly generalizable to houses in many places and times, these political dimensions define historically specific qualities of Çatalhöyük itself. Their purpose is twofold: to help put a name to the more foreign political potentials of an unfamiliar material culture, and to act as reference points against which to recognize historical change. In Chapter 6, I argue that, over several centuries, some of these potentials waxed and others waned: people made space differently, creating different material political conditions. Defining these political dimensions thus helps us to understand change at 7th millennium Çatalhöyük on its own terms, rather than tying the narrative to political phenomena that are central in our time (cf. §3.2). Although some of the practices considered here had deep historical roots in Anatolia, and others had long continuation forward into the 6th millennium or even further, I am sure that other concepts would better help to understand politics and change even in 'adjacent' places and times. These four specify Çatalhöyük as a particular place to live together, and helps to understand the way this site's communities gave shape to and changed their world.

4.5.1 Integrity

Before you ever entered Building 131, what could you be sure of seeing there? In other words, what was *integral* to a Çatalhöyük house? Different places and times see different norms of what a minimally-occupied house contains. In modern Britain, a house may or may not have a small conservatory at back, but without indoor plumbing or electricity it would be unfit for habitation. 100 years ago, these were not integral to housing in remote parts of the country, and 200 years ago they would have been unthinkable. Plumbing and wiring condition houses' material politics: few of us have the requisite skills to maintain, much less build and operate, such services independent of specialists and the cash economy. The materiality of our houses thus comes 'packaged' with an integral set of social relationships.

Before you entered Building 131, you could expect to find recently-plastered walls and floors; an entry area within a 'dirty' half of the space; and at least two rectangular platforms. You could expect that it had been built by a sizeable group of people, and guess that there were artefacts and/or bodies buried below the floors at the time of construction (even if you

did not know who, what or where exactly these were)(Carter et al. 2015). You could assume that someone in the house or nearby remembered these events, and indeed a great deal more about the history of that location. By the mid-7th millennium certain specific arrangements—like the presence of a bench channelling movement from the ladder entry around, rather than directly onto, nearby platforms—had become near-ubiquitous, as well (§5.4 and §6.5).

These integral aspects point to fundamental premises of houses as political entities. Plastering walls in the particular way done at Çatalhöyük involved arranging a collaborative workforce of several members (up to a dozen or more) one or more times a year (St. George 2012; see §4.6). Buildings' repetitious internal layout points to a well-established habitus shaping movement and the organization of practice (Hodder and Cessford 2004), meaning that even people who rarely entered a space could quickly get their bearings in the building and work in coordination with others (§5.4). The near-ubiquity of foundation deposits meant that all houses acted as indexes of previously-built consensus (§5.6), and established a consistent politics of knowledge where different people had more or less clear senses of the bodies and artefacts below their feet (see §4.5.3 below). Perhaps more than anything, the sense that there was something worth remembering in that place was integral to keeping the house socially vital (Hodder and Pels 2010). All of these dynamics were effectively 'baked into' domestic communities through the consistent material aspects of 66th century Çatalhöyük buildings (see Chapter 5). Or, to reverse this observation: for a building to stay living, it needed to be involved in communities committed to these precise kinds of practice.

On the other hand, many of the aspects of houses that are centred by conventional household archaeology approaches appear less integral to Building 131. Although the building contained some sort of oven-hearth combination at all points in its life, the precise arrangements vary widely (and many contemporary structures see ovenless or entirely kitchenless periods in their lives: §5.5). People only stored goods in bins and processed materials in basins intermittently, and it was apparently more usual to take a portable and spatially-flexible approach to these tasks. The overall picture in Building 131 is of gradual change in metabolic tasks and perhaps more punctuated change in burial and painting practices. Although the building was not in constant flux, many 'core' domestic practices were fundamentally negotiable.

4.5.2 Friction

As you descended into Building 131, you would have seen almost the entire space: everything east of the screen wall, plus glimpses of the kitchen and platform beyond, and

even perhaps a corner of the side space. Unlike many kinds of domestic architecture, Çatalhöyük houses did not create a rich politics of boundaries using internal walls, halls, and doorways. Up to about 90% of any building's floor space was in a single room, and Building 131's tripartite layout was almost as complicated as the site's interiors could be. But this does not mean that the topology of Çatalhöyük houses was simple. Instead of hard barriers, Çatalhöyük interiors were delineated into numerous segments using passable low obstacles like ridges, platforms and benches. These features did not preclude movement, but they did texture it by suggesting divisions and requiring passers-through to step up, down, and over some boundary every few paces (Hodder and Cessford 2004). I call the political consequences of this passable, textured differentiation *friction*.

Moving around and arranging practices in space are fundamental political practices. Architecture shapes the kinds of encounters and cues that texture people's experiences of one another (Bourdieu 1977, 89–91; Hodder and Cessford 2004; Kent 1990). It allows some activities to impact on others, keeps other sets of practices and people far apart, and generates phenomena like accessibility and seclusion, privacy and exposure, meeting points, bustle, and quiet (Lefebvre 2013). Although we cannot watch people pass through Çatalhöyük spaces, the fact that people at Çatalhöyük contoured houses using friction begins to hint at some of the ways the political power of architecture was structured.

The segmented layout of Çatalhöyük buildings derives, historically, from the bipartite layout of houses at earlier sites like Boncuklu Höyük, which contained hearth/entry segments and 'clean' (often slightly raised) inner segments (Baird, Fairbairn and Martin 2017). However, by the time Building 131 was built, Çatalhöyük's inhabitants had refined the segmented open-plan layout into a uniquely complex form, with upwards of eight defined segments per building on average (Kay 2014, 100–101). Designing spaces with friction created a situationally flexible structure for practice and movement. With the exception of the wooden screen wall and the internal mudbrick wall, the demarcations in Building 131 did not obstruct movement. Even the highest platform, in the centre-east, could have been stepped onto with ease. Low steps and ridges guided and slowed down movement without fully impeding it. Although some segments were clearly furnished to afford certain kinds of activities like cooking or burial, there is no evidence that segments at Çatalhöyük were devoted exclusively to specific sets of activities ('knap obsidian on this side of the kerb; grind grain on that side'). Indeed in various 66th century buildings there are instances where seemingly discordant practices overlap in space, for example, phytoliths suggestive of grain processing on top of burial platforms (Eddisford 2013, 339), or burials and other 'ritual' activities in storage areas (see examples in Chapter 5). Individual segments, like the far southwestern cooking area in Building 131, could have a shifting range of furnishings

through their lives. Rather than parcelling out space for fixed purposes, then, segmentation may have served as a basis for improvising boundaries when multiple tasks were ongoing at once, helping to work through tensions and potential clashes within shared spaces on a more ad-hoc basis.

Equally, delineating and furnishing segments could allow single practices to be split into different areas. In Building 131 this is especially evident in the range of cooking areas that existed, likely contemporaneously, in the structure. Whatever caused the house to be outfitted with three ovens in its earliest life, there is no physical reason these had to be set in three discrete segments. It is, of course, impossible to show whether these three cooking areas were used truly simultaneously, or if practice alternated between them based on seasonality, comings and goings of different cooks or diners, or other factors. But the need for three kitchens at once suggests that the physical friction between cooking areas *accentuated differences between people* or between situations.

This example suggests that friction was also a social principle. 'Folds' in the fabric of communities could be accentuated in some contexts without partitioning groups into separate houses. This has been suggested for Çatalhöyük by Mellaart (1967, 60), who accounted for the diversity of platforms in buildings by positing that different gender and age groups needed to sleep in different areas. But storage, cooking, and burial were also spread among multiple segments, sometimes at a distance from one another, within Building 131 and many of its contemporaries. In any of these practices, it was not only important *in what house* a person cooked, dined, drew on food stores, slept, or was buried. It also mattered *where in that house* they did so.

It is in the nature of domestic communities to contain such 'folds' along various lines of gender, age, family/kin group, daily-resident versus occasional-collaborator, bodily ability, and the like. Ethnographic studies, including in 'traditional' mud-brick villages in the Middle East (Horne 1994; Kramer 1982, chap.4) note a vast range of co-sleeping, co-cooking, and other collaborative arrangements that bring nominally-different people together in houses and separate them into different areas. As Tuan (1982) points out, however, the physicality of space helps to shape notional differences into deep-rooted experiential differences between people. Whether or not people have individual bedrooms shapes how individuality works in a given context; who cooks in the same oven, and who eats the food from the same oven, or at least the same kitchen, shapes how commensal communities work (Hastorf 2012). At Çatalhöyük, the ability to demarcate and multiply communities without truly dividing them fits well with a society constantly working through a 'paradox of division and cohesion' (Bogaard, Charles and Twiss 2010, 314). Friction developed

distinguishable spaces, roles and taskscapes without compressing people into a simple unity, nor dividing them into fully discrete units. It allowed difference to be recognized in some contexts and ignored (or recognized along different lines) in others. Investigating further the ways that friction was created (and the other ways space was given a meaningful topology) over time at Çatalhöyük will key us into changes in these foundational dynamics of community in coming chapters.

4.5.3 A tension between depths and surfaces

Walking through Building 131 near the end of its life, stepping carefully over the ridges and rises that textured its floor, you might have been able to infer some aspects of its history at first sight. Unevenness in the south wall west of the wooden screen would have suggested the earlier presence of an oven cut into the wall there. Perhaps the thickness of the wall plasters would have suggested its old age. But the fact that there was once a free-standing oven in the southwest corner, that the northeastern quadrant had spent much of its life painted bright red, or that there were twin scapulae set like bookends at the sides of the northwestern niche—all of these would have been invisible. And yet deeply buried features seem to have shaped the structure's biography in a number of ways. How is it that, in multi-generation structures, people continued to know, care about, and adapt their creative practices around long-invisible features?

There was a tension between two essential ways of making space at Çatalhöyük: one that worked by making matter visible and active on the surface, and one that worked by layering-over and burying matter. I call these, respectively, *politics of surfaces* and *politics of depth.* The politics of surfaces includes most of what today's archaeologists recognize as elements of architecture: the use of material media, from mudbrick to fire to human bone, to create zones of activity, pathways for movement and encounter, gradients of visibility and attention, and differentiated affects and atmospheres (Bille and Sørensen 2016). In terms of the active registers that I defined in Chapter 3 (§3.3.2), surface politics used *insistent* matter to differentiate space and give it the capacity to act in a range of communities. Building 131's kitchen areas (with their different longevities) provided several focal points for activity, which as an ensemble shifted occasionally through the building's use life. Displays (either fixed in place, like paintings, or portable, like curated skulls and artefacts that may have been placed in niches above the burial platforms) visually asserted qualities of the building, for example as historically, ancestrally and/or ritually central. Channelling movement, focusing activity, and displaying importance: the way each of these was done in Building 131 changed through time, as niches were closed or added, paintings executed and

covered over, ovens rebuilt or truncated, platforms and ridges added to the space.

But living at Çatalhöyük also confronted the site's residents with the depth of the space around them. In houses, along the roofscape and in middens there was an upward, accumulating motion. By the time a person reached adolescence, she would have seen this gradual uplift occurring in noticeable, if subtle ways. She would almost certainly have participated in some of the practices that created this dynamic: plastering floors and walls, dumping ash in middens, construction. The steady rise of surfaces created other facts that shaped the saliency of material space. Spatial features tended to be subsumed within the rising clay matrix, unless they were actively and quite literally 'kept up'; continuity had to be explicitly chosen and maintained, especially for low features like hearths and ridges. Traces of activities—ash spreads, paintings, burial cuts, and deposits embedded in surfaces—tended to vanish, within the year at most. But when holes were dug through the surface, they revealed a complex subsurface full of spatialized, recognizable material culture. From the mechanics of mudbrick walls built atop buried houses to the details of their mortuary practice, people at Çatalhöyük 'fitted' practice in the present to precisely-located remains in the subsurface. Space's active capacities were not defined solely by its present surface but by what was known, or inferred, or revealed to be 'down there' below the surface.

The depth of spaces like Building 131 gave them political potentials beyond what conventional studies of domestic space tend to capture. Where a politics of surfaces worked through features' often short-lived insistence, a politics of depth occurred as insistent material was converted to embedded material (and vice-versa, through digging). The fact of rising surfaces, and people's embodied knowledge of that fact, meant that embedded, subsurface matter was an active, meaningful part of space's topology. This helps to account for some outstanding questions about why Building 131 was made the way it was. What good did it do to embed cattle scapulae in the northwestern niche, only to cover them over with plaster so as to be invisible? Why (and how) did people keep track of previous burial locations to such an extent that the sequential cuts in the northeast platform follow one another almost perfectly, leaving archaeologists to infer the sequence from taphonomic investigation? Whether they were later revealed (like a re-dug grave) or left embedded (like the scapulae), it is the common awareness of all Çatalhöyük residents that there was a world of specifically -located matter below their feet, literally supporting the world 'up here', that made such acts politically powerful well beyond the period of their physical formation and insistence at the surface.

All of this points to the idea that space was not made through a series of free-standing creative acts: every new creative act impacted others, new floor plasters sealing burial cuts

below the surface or new layers refreshing an oven's protective clay lining to keep the feature standing for a few more years. Much of the political potential of space-making came, not through singular acts but the way present action was 'fitted' to established materiality, and projected a modified materiality forward into the future. This reality of life in a rising, layered-on world could be worked with in different ways. Following the way people in different parts of the 7th millennium navigated the tension between surfaces and depths to activate space in their communities will help us to unpack the way domestic space-making negotiated between material pasts and possible futures.

4.5.4 Creative dependency

This final dimension of Çatalhöyük houses' material politics emphasizes the extent to which people planned to rely on one another. In a moment, I will consider the way Building 131 was constructed by carrying bricks across the roofscape, by aggregating recently-dead bodies from extensive social networks, by resting on walls built by long-dead people and by building single-width masonry that needed steady investment of labour over the years to stay standing. This is not how people who insist on maintaining their autonomy build things. To the contrary, Building 131's builders seem to have gone out of their way to rely on many different kinds of support. Just by existing, the structure materialized a far-reaching and multilateral consensus.

This is just one of many examples that we will encounter in coming chapters of *creative dependency*: a dynamic of space-making that not only resists working as small, self-sufficient social units, but that seems to actively seek to rely on multilateral networks of people and things. Building 131 is in fact an unusual case among 66th century structures, in that for the entire time it was inhabited it had at least some capacity for cooking, storage, sleeping, burial, and other vital needs of 7th millennium life. As we will see in the next chapter, many of Building 131's contemporaries went through periods where they lacked cooking facilities, had very limited food stores, were not used for burial or otherwise seem ill-equipped for one or more of mainstay roles, even while other kinds of habitation carried on.

It can be difficult to understand some of these events. Why would people remove the kitchen from a house they were still living in? Why block off a long-lived burial platform with cattle horns, putting a cap on a building's long-held central status within large communities? We live in a time when dependency is dangerous, and reliance is perhaps too quickly associated with vulnerability. But there is a creative power to relying on others (e.g. DeMarrais 2016). Clearing a house of its ability to feed its residents, or ceasing burial in a major burial

location and sending the dead elsewhere, meant that people who previously may have eaten or arranged funerals in this one building were committed to working with other people, elsewhere, in a very physical way. To access a range of spaces in the course of one's daily life, not on voluntary terms but as a real need (or to live in a space needed by many different people) affirmed cross-cutting bonds and undercut the primacy of any one community.

Tracing the way houses were equipped and unequipped for vital tasks can help to follow the ways that social and practical bonds crossed architectural boundaries and enchained houses in expansive relationships. This is especially true of metabolic tasks related to food storage, processing, and cooking that all people needed to participate in somehow. In Chapter 5, I will contextualize the diminishing kitchen facilities and increasingly fixed storage arrangements in Building 131 among a range of contemporary buildings' biographies. By showing how buildings relied on one another to meet the full range of human needs, and shifted in those relationships through time, I will argue that mid-7th millennium society was characterized by a strong, steady drive toward interdependence, challenging models of the period rooted in the notion of stably autonomous households. By casting aside the normative assumption that independence is desirable, either for households or some larger corporate arrangement, and capturing the social power of reliance, we will then trace a richer interplay of architecture, human needs and more-than-human communities across the 7th millennium.

4.6 Spotlight: the walls of Building 131 as social projects

At the start of Chapter 3 I noted how, at the trowel's edge, Çatalhöyük can feel incomprehensibly foreign. This contrasted sharply with the terms in which houses are understood in conventional household archaeology, which can be stiflingly familiar: emerging inequality between households, the erection of tenuous barriers between public and private spheres of action, and so on. Just as neither measuring tapes nor total stations can fully make out the dimensions of Danielewski's '*House of Leaves*', assessing a house like Building 131 as the 'material footprint' of a single household or relating its different features to 'household' and 'corporate' spheres never quite adds up. Building 131 did not represent anyone. Rather, as a social actor in its own right, it collaborated with many different people, in many different ways, to carve out the future. To grasp this, we need to think of the house, not as a *fait accompli* but as an engine for change.

The suite of analyses and concepts that I lay out above help to follow change through the years of Building 131's occupation. Already, by beginning to define the shape of one house's biography and the particular political dimensions that emerge in the space, we can

imagine a richer 7th millennium world than our stock model allows. As a final turn to this discussion, let us re-explore the biography of Building 131. Having laid out the contours of different practices through time and the dimensions of material politics these constructed, this section zooms in on a particular material aspect of the space – its walls and foundations – and considers the diversity of communities that masonry as a *field of action* actually constituted (§3.3.3). It shows how a politics of change came together in practice and inhered in the very substance of Building 131.

4.6.1 Laying the foundations

The mudbrick walls of Building 131 seem simple, straightforward, and timeless: courses of tempered clay brick, joined with a more viscous mortar and sealed with clay plaster, standing in foundation trenches and distributing the weight of a wood-and-clay roof into the ground. They look superficially similar to mudbrick walls in other Neolithic towns, and for that matter in 'traditional' farming villages across south and southwest Asia in recent decades. But a closer look shows that this is not entirely so. Here I focus on three aspects of the structure's walls that are less intuitive: their relationship to the architecture below them; the bodies embedded in or next to them; and the maintenance and reworking activities that sustained them. Modern mudbrick walls rarely incorporate dead human bodies in their foundations; the walls of structures at many other Neolithic sites were less scrupulously set atop earlier buildings. The specific politics of 66th century Çatalhöyük inhered in the site's walls, producing details we do not find in other mudbrick-using societies. In the terms that I set out in Chapter 3, wall-building at Çatalhöyük was a *field of action* that integrated political context, material contingencies, and situated objectives into the very materiality of the walls themselves (Robb 2010; Kay in prep.). Specific projects like constructing Building 131 were carried out within fields of action current to their time and circumstances, with historically-specific kinds of political implications. Along the way, a range of communities, with different bases in practice, different degrees of specificity or vagueness, and different stakes in the structure were stitched together.

Building 139 was Building 131's predecessor. After its occupation and closure, Building 139 was imploded, and the area atop its rubble used as an open space for an unknown amount of time before the construction of Building 131 began. The first action in the construction of Building 131 was the excavation of a massive pit, digging out the eastern wall of Building 139 to its very foundations without disturbing other internal features (Figure 4.13c). In total, the cut contained around 20,000L of soil and took a team of six archaeologists with steel mattocks several days to re-excavate. With Neolithic tools, this was a remarkable

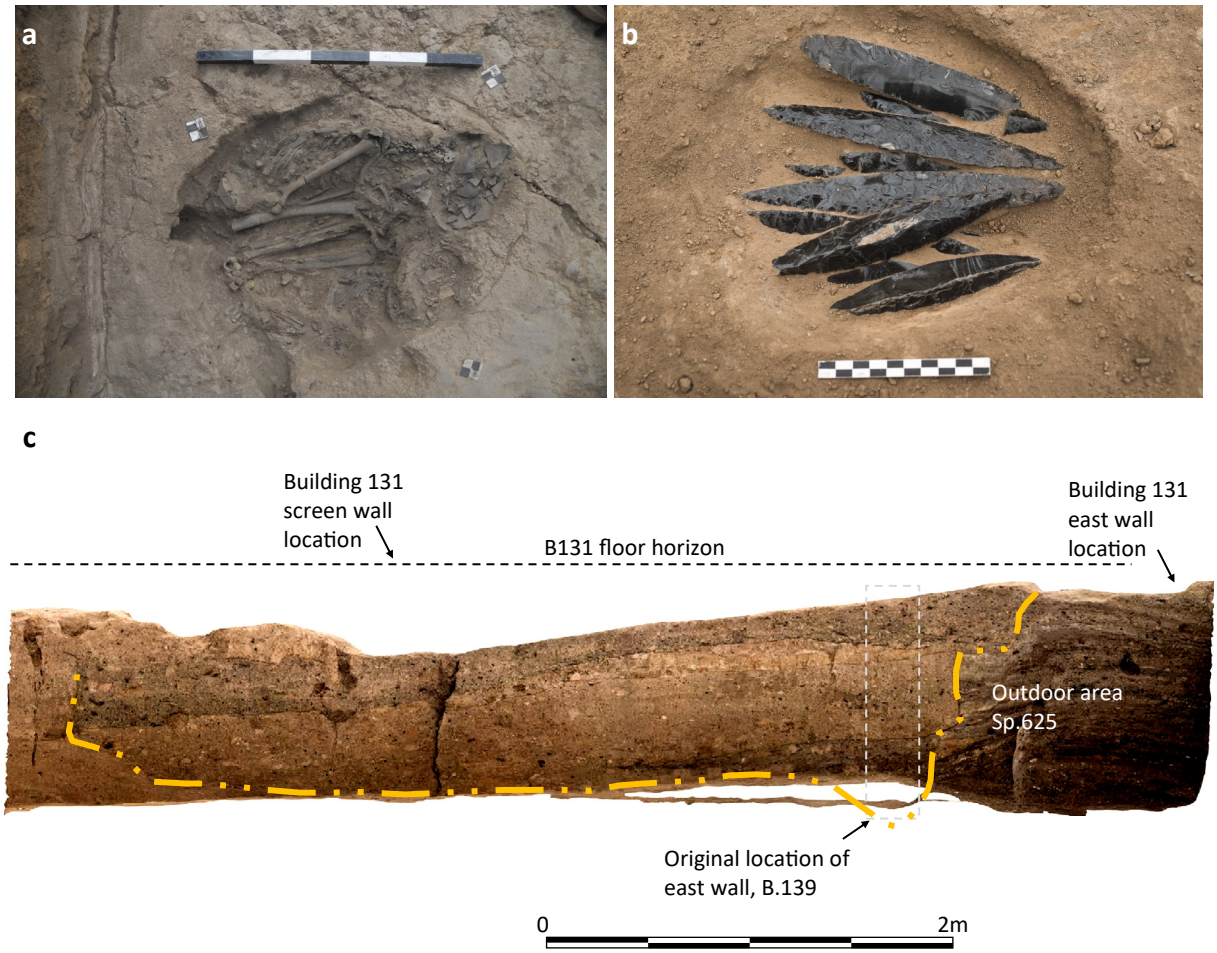


Figure 4.13. Foundation activities in Building 131. (a) Double foundation burial F.8374 along the northern wall, facing east. (b) Obsidian cache in the side space. (c) Composite section of infill of Building 139, showing large cut uprooting eastern wall. From 3D model; contrast enhanced to show soil differences. Facing north. Photos used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

undertaking likely involving many participants and an extended period of time (Belmonte 2017). Its purpose is unclear. Such wall removal exercises have been explained elsewhere at Çatalhöyük as brick recycling efforts (Yeomans 2013a), but there is no evidence that recycled brick was used in the walls of Building 131. Belmonte (2017, 35), noting the broad mouth of the pit, suggests the purpose was to quarry rubble for other uses. However, the pit was refilled with building rubble similar to Building 139's, suggesting the material removed from the pit was promptly redeposited there—except for the eastern wall and any items, e.g. sculptures, that the diggers recovered from the rubble.

Levelling and consolidation layers were subsequently laid across the entire footprint of Building 131. In this layer, along the lines of the screen wall and the main northern wall, the bodies of two juveniles, two adults, and an infant were embedded (Figure 4.13a). Foundation trenches were dug for the eastern wall and the northeastern projection, which extended out into previously-unbuilt space with soft sediments. A foetus in a wooden container was

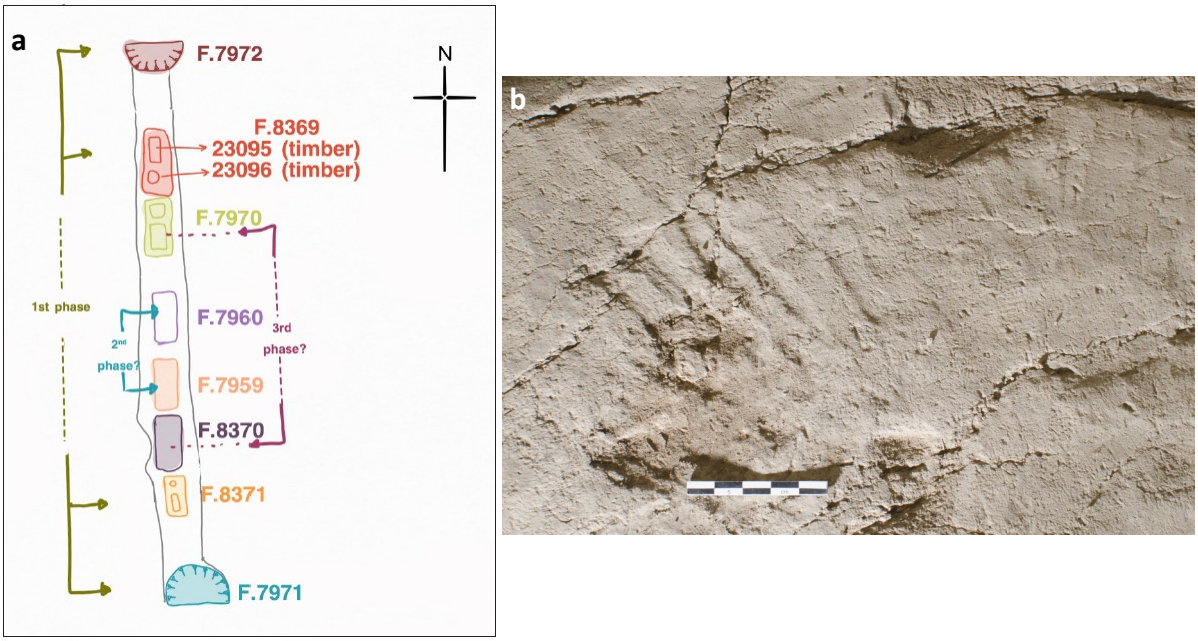


Figure 4.14. Maintaining Building 131. (a) Field sketch showing stages of post addition to screen wall. Sketch: Jovana Tripković, see Tripković 2017, 39-40. (b) Hand prints in floor plaster layer. Both images used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

embedded in the northeast trenches, and a stepped foundation raft of square tile-like bricks was set below the southeastern corner of the structure. Additionally, pits containing animal bone and obsidian points were dug through the foundation levelling of the building (see above). After these activities, the mudbrick masonry of the walls was laid, with long mudbricks and viscous mortar resting directly atop the stubs of Building 139's walls in the north, south, and west, but extending out into previously-unbuilt space about a metre beyond the now-uprooted eastern boundary of its predecessor. The house was roofed, furnished, and occupation began.

After this period of intensive formation, the walls of Building 131 insisted for many years, defining the contours of space and practice in a range of ways (see below). Their insistence was extended over many years through steady maintenance. The posts in the wooden screen wall were supplemented or replaced at least twice, and in one such episode a foetus was placed below a newly-installed post (Figure 4.14). All walls were plastered regularly, accumulating 2-3 cm of thin washes over time. The way Catalhoyuk people plastered their houses was an unusually high-frequency and labour-intensive way of maintaining mudbrick. Experimental work suggests that keeping the house plastered would have been an almost full -time job for one or two people—or, more likely, that groups larger than a small 'family'-type household needed to be involved to achieve the frequency of plastering that micromorphology suggests for 66th century houses. St. George's (2012) experimental work, for

example, which achieved the best approximation of Neolithic plasters, used a team of 15 workers in order to efficiently plaster a house somewhat smaller than Building 131. We can immediately begin to consider a dynamic of regular labour pooling that brought people together across house boundaries (Stevanović 2012a).

How are we to understand this series of actions, and the way they built communities in and through Building 131? Some seem intuitive—using courses of viscous mortar to bind together dry brick; preparing the ground for a new building with a thick layer of fine, compacted packing earth—while others, like the uprooting of the eastern wall below, the embedding of dead bodies in the levelling deposits or the high-frequency manner of plastering the space, challenge our imaginations. It is tempting to write off the less intuitive details as idiosyncratic, 'ritual' or otherwise non-functional aspects of mudbrick walls. Walls are mechanical objects; they are brick and mortar. No matter if there happen to be bodies in their foundations, if there are two hundred thin plasters or twenty thick ones on them, or if there is the fill of a massive wall-uprooting pit below the room. Foetuses and foundation deposits or none, where walls bound off a small area with a kitchen and some bins, we comfortably call the result a domestic unit, and relate the qualities of this unit to a notional household. However, if we start to think about how these walls depended on people (Hodder 2012, chap.6); how they established a specific temporal frame for practice; and how all of this factored the building into diverse lives, we can start to understand more clearly the open-ended politics that making space really navigated at Çatalhöyük, and the way the politics of bodies, pits, and plasters became essential to what a wall *was*, and how walls *worked.*

4.6.2 Building contingently

In each of its active registers, Building 131 was built to depend. Each of the actions above relied upon the ability to assemble labour, material, and to use space in ways that impacted others. Walls like this made sense within a particular material politics of action in the 66th century at Çatalhöyük—not just conceptually, but physically too. I especially want to explore here how Building 131's walls reveal consensus-building by incorporating special materials; how they reveal a politics of time and memory as part of what I will call historical consensus-building; and finally, how the materiality of these walls established a temporal dimension of action that structured communities involved in the house.

Carter et al. (2015), building on Moses (2008), make the striking claim that as mid-7th millennium houses were being constructed dead babies were 'gifted' from broader communities to serve as foundation offerings. This follows a frank logic: many buildings of

this time have several dead infants in their foundations, wholly or mostly articulated, and it is unlikely that a single household (even a large one) would have four or more recently-dead newborns at hand within the short timeframe of the initial stage of building construction. One possibility is that construction contexts were seen as especially fitting places to bury a dead newborn, and people waited for construction to begin somewhere in the site to deposit newborn bodies (Boz and Hager 2013). However, we can also approach these acts from the perspective of the walls as creative acts incorporating infant lives (Tibbetts 2017). Elsewhere (Kay in prep.), I have shown that the overwhelming majority (71%) of human bodies physically touching masonry at Çatalhöyük are associated with walls that were either demonstrably unstable (they leaned sharply or show evidence of repair or shoring-up) or sit on loose sediment rather than underlying walls. This number is much higher than we would expect, given that only about 13% of walls at Çatalhöyük demonstrate structural precarity in the ways I considered. Further, human remains in/against walls sitewide have an exceptional demographic profile, consisting almost entirely of articulated foetal/newborn/infant bodies and curated adult bones. Primary burials of individuals over age three in foundation contexts usually prefigure occupation-phase burial platforms rather than following walls. Building 131 is unusual in this regard, with a demographically-diverse range of bodies embedded along its wall-lines in parts of the space that were not otherwise used for burial.

Note how, as a creative act, a wall-with-newborns differs dramatically from a generic mudbrick wall. A mudbrick wall can be built by a small extended family, or indeed slowly by a few workers (Kramer 1982; Tung 2013c). For a small group to supply several recently-dead newborns is implausible, and although Building 131 has a more varied demographic profile in its foundations, for a small extended family to experience the deaths of seven members of all ages in short succession would have been a truly catastrophic loss. I agree with Carter et al. (2015): it seems more plausible that the construction of Building 131 involved a larger community in various capacities, from people 'gifting' their dead to the structure to those who actually formed, transported, and assembled the brick walls. Other significant efforts, like the production of the masterful obsidian blade cache and the felling of numerous large trees for posts in the side space, further reflect efforts to involve specialized individuals, extensive labour forces and rare/costly materials in the construction process.

In addition to the potentially sizeable groups of people involved directly in constructing Building 131, other people were indirectly involved through the way construction imposed on (or depended on) other spaces. For some time before its construction, Building 131's footprint was an open space, used for midden-type activities. Moreover, when the structure was built, it extended eastward beyond the footprint of previous buildings in this location,

effectively 'annexing' a portion of the long-lived outdoor activity area to the east. This activity area was in use from the earliest excavated levels in the North Area, and was a vital workspace in a neighbourhood increasingly short on such spaces as the site reached peak density. The construction of Building 131 likely substantially impacted the routines, not just of its inhabitants, but of neighbouring structures as well. More concretely, the material used in Building 131 (bricks, mortar, levelling clays, bodies, and obsidian) had to reach the building site somehow. This meant many trips to and from the site's edge, perhaps across other rooftops, as the substance of the future building physically passed through other living spaces (Stevanović 2012a). From this, we can infer that neighbouring people (and indeed everyone along the route from site's-edge clay sources to the build location near the mound's centre) at least tacitly consented to the construction process.

The broader point is this: Building 131 was not built as independently as possible, and indeed was in many ways built specifically *to depend* on many, differently-involved communities. There was no physical reason a small household could not build a free-standing structure, with thick walls and buttresses and no bodies in the foundations, on previously-unbuilt ground at the site's edge, effectively circumventing most of the dependencies outlined above. Indeed, around the end of the 7th millennium, people at Çatalhöyük seem to have done just that, building heavily-buttressed freestanding houses on the far side of the Çarşamba River at the base of Çatalhöyük's West Mound (Orton et al. 2018). Construction at Çatalhöyük in the mid-7th millennium was a different kind of political act (cf. Carter et al. 2015). It not only established an architectural 'unit', it tied a range of communities into the building as stakeholders, people who had given use of their rooftop, their skills and labour, even their dead offspring to the structure.

This was important, because walls at Çatalhöyük depended on consensus, not just at the moment of construction, but over time. Indeed, the way walls of this sort materially relied on human input was a powerful temporally-structuring force (Hodder 2012; cf. McFadyen 2016). Here is where the frequent, thin plastering of Building 131's walls and the steady repair of the screen wall reveals a particular way of depending through time. There are clear, practical benefits to the frequency of plastering at Çatalhöyük: wall plasters protected mudbrick from weathering, and created highly-reflective interior surfaces that distributed dim light effectively. Repairs, perhaps, were simply necessary for a gracile pisé-and-wood screen wall built without a structure below to serve as a stable foundation. But equally, we can reverse these statements. Building gracile walls (whether screen walls, or single-width mudbrick walls that faltered about 13% of the time—(Kay in prep.)) meant relying on the future work of repairing them. Alternative ways of building, e.g. with complex masonry and buttresses, may have demanded less steady repair work (Barański et al. 2014). Likewise, it

was not impossible to build windows in Çatalhöyük houses to alleviate the need for fresh, bright plasters. Densely-clustered Çatalhöyük buildings likely had less dire susceptibility to weathering than mudbrick structures elsewhere. The intensive plastering regime in main rooms at Çatalhöyük could easily have been foregone, if the goal was to reduce the regularity with which collaborative workforces needed to be mustered. The fact that Çatalhöyük buildings were instead built as they were reflects a material politics geared toward interdependency, not identity and independence.

Finally, note that the interdependence linking communities through the materiality of walls also *spanned time*, linking long-past creative actions (Building 139's walls; buried crawlholes; dead persons) into contemporary construction. The walls of Building 131 and its contemporaries relied, quite physically, on the stability of wall stubs below the surface, that were built decades or centuries prior. They also sometimes incorporated curated human bones in their foundations – keepsakes or fragments of past lives. Often, there are exceptional efforts to reconcile new buildings with their buried predecessors, far beyond what was mechanically necessary. This is how I understand the enigmatic pit uprooting Building 139's eastern wall. Whether or not these bricks were recycled elsewhere, the huge expenditure of labour also established this wall as a focus of attention at the time that location was about to undergo substantial transformation. While this is far from standard practice, other examples of massive interventions in walls at transformative moments do exist (Yeomans 2013a).

Uprooting a dissonant wall down below, embedding the dead against or near the new walls, and mustering labour to fell trees and produce obsidian blades performatively established consensus between the past and present, buried and surface, dead and living, and among the living. This was an integral part of how Çatalhöyük walls functioned. They were not built to stand strong with the minimum possible input, but to depend broadly on neighbours, collaborative labour, materials with different sources and skill requirements, and on the past. The specific ways they depended—growing dingy, becoming unstable where no walls below supported them, requiring neighbouring rooftops for access—gave walls the capacity to reconfigure relationships in specific ways; they gave them political power as a field of action. I am not arguing that there was no core to the multiplicity of communities involved in, and stitched together through, Building 131. There may well have been, at a given moment, a clearly-defined group known to be the structure's household. But there were also clearly other ways to be involved in Building 131. Through time, multiple lines of attachment, materially different and also temporally different, formed around the space. When we trace out the material and practical dimensions of Building 131, the parties involved multiply (Mol 2002). The walls themselves belonged to no one community among these; they participated in all of them.

4.7 Conclusion

Any one of the space-making acts that make up Building 131's history had ramifications for diverse lives and social dynamics. Hewing large timbers that had stood in the landscape for (perhaps) centuries and carrying them to the site; sharing a daily meal, made up of food harvested by some people, stored somewhere particular, and processed and cooked by another set of people (perhaps partially overlapping with the first set); collecting together rare pigments to make an exceptionally memorable burial: each of these took time, effort, commitment, and cooperation among people. This is what I mean by 'they were political': they were a way lives affected one another by shaping the material world.

If we traced out the lines of relationship to include every person who contributed to Building 131's excavated form, directly with their hands or indirectly by planting or harvesting crops, collecting obsidian or pigment, or gifting dead babies, I am certain we would find an extensive network with several distinct groups involved in making and keeping the house alive, and burning it down at the end of its life. Each group might be considered a stakeholder in the space, with the ability to impact the others through their participation in the building. With this in mind, the material politics of Building 131 becomes much richer than if we consider it as a simple index of the nature of one household. Other social dynamics more freely penetrate into, activate, and shape the space.

We can learn about these social dynamics by zooming in on specific transformative moments in houses' biographies. Some of these, like the erection of the building's walls (bodies and all), can prove extremely telling in the way they reveal the intersection of communities through a material medium. In other cases individual projects (specific series of transformative action) remain more opaque, as the circumstances and objectives they took account of, as well as their material consequences, remain vague. For this reason, I have developed a package of analyses and concepts that help us to compare buildings' biographies, and learn something about the political structure of Çatalhöyük society by generalizing between instances and contexts. As we will see, the four material political dimensions laid out above never specified courses of action to be undertaken robotically; instead, they appear in a wide range of creative acts in diverse ways, indeed shifting in prominence over the centuries-long history of the tell.

One final thing to note is a recurring theme in this chapter: the politics that took place through Building 131 spilled out. In construction, bodies that once lived, moved and formed relationships were brought to this one site and integrated into the structure. People contributing bodies, skills, labour, or simply making way for the transport of materials across their

customary rooftop living space pulsed into the structure over the course of days or weeks as the building rose. Fuel and foodstuffs flowed into out of the building, within which they were organized, divided, and combined variously. Relationships formed, but also likely dissolved, in the structure's life, and people who had lived there may have left for other places from time to time. Even after the building's closure it acted outward and upward was walls, burials and other features were cited or physically integrated into future buildings. In this chapter, I have endeavoured to 'measure up' the internal dimensions of one building, and found that (like the house of leaves that gives this chapter its title) it cannot be done. Architecture at Çatalhöyük depended, and so it cannot be studied in isolation. The processes through which it emerged extended far beyond any set of walls. It is with this in mind that I turn to examine several of Building 131's contemporaries, and the material politics of houses that pulsed across them.

Chapter 5

House biographies and interdependent communities in the 66th century

5.1 Introduction

Considering houses' biographies changes the way we look for communities in relation to built space. Rather than asking 'what kind of building is this' or 'what kind of people lived in it', a biographical approach assumes that these qualities could change over time; any stability had to be actively sustained against a backdrop of inexorable change. Moreover, there could be many answers at once: houses participated in many more-than-human communities in specific material ways. In the last chapter we saw how Building 131 played active roles in thoroughfare through a neighbourhood, in commemorating and continuing the creative projects of ancestors, in burial and economies of rare goods like pigments and curated skulls, in daily metabolism, and more. Rather than relating to a single, unitary household or acting as a cog of determinate shape within a larger group, I argued that the house was involved in a shifting set of communities.

If houses were not made to holistically meet the needs of a few people, then people needed to work with several buildings in order to live. And as individual buildings' roles shifted, lives too needed to be reconfigured in space. All of this suggests that studying houses' biographies individually only scratches the surface of the material politics of houses at Çatalhöyük. A comparative approach can help paint a broader picture: how did space-making give shape to lives that crossed between (and literally across the rooftops of) many houses? Looking at houses in this light opens up little-asked questions about prehistoric life: about the social mechanisms that shaped small changes into larger biographical trajectories; about interactions between partially-overlapping communities; and about individual life in a complex social landscape. In more concrete terms, such questions might look like this:

- If you descended into a Çatalhöyük house, what could you know about its history at a glance? To what extent did Çatalhöyük houses 'age' in similar ways, and why? How did the history of a house inform the way communities formed through it?

- When people buried a dead body in a Çatalhöyük house, was it salient to consider who ground grain there? Did houses' decoration with sculptures factor into the way people went about routine tasks within them?

- How unstable were storage arrangements from harvest to harvest? How did daily meals change as some individuals came of age, and others died or became frail? Could a person at Çatalhöyük find themselves homeless or friendless?

Although archaeologists rarely investigate questions like these in any depth, they hit at the core of intimate communities' material process. Most notably, all of them implicate spaces, features and deposits in actively making, sustaining and transforming community life. Although we will not tackle each of the questions above head-on in this thesis, a material political approach helps to define the possibility space within which such dynamics operated, and will go far to sketching in a clearer, more transformative sociality across the site as a whole.

This chapter takes the conceptual and methodological devices developed in the last chapter and examines eight roughly-contemporary houses from the peak of Çatalhöyük's occupation in the 66th century (Figure 5.1). I present four detailed biographies of houses from the North Area Level G (to which Building 131 can be added), supplemented by 'coarse' biographical information about three further houses for which Harris matrices were not available. After briefly walking through each building's history, I explore three material political dimensions. First, I discuss tempos of change and the establishment of buildings' layouts, arguing that layouts with *friction* helped to navigate the social complexities of spaces shared between diverse and changing communities. Then I examine houses' changing roles in metabolic practices like food storage and cooking, showing how houses were crafted to avoid self-sufficiency and instead engage in *creative dependency* among spaces. Finally, I consider the way histories were constructed through performances, deposition and display, and the *tension between politics of surfaces and depths* that emerged as such history accumulated in a house. Chapter 6 situates the 66th century in a broader historical trajectory considering political change through deeper time.

5.2 Four building biographies from the 66th century

All eight buildings investigated in this chapter are assigned stratigraphically to the North Area Level G, and likely date to the 66th century (Table 2.1). Preliminary radiocarbon results suggest that these eight buildings were temporally imbricated: although their construction and demolition dates vary, each building's occupation overlaps with several others in the set (but see note on absolute chronology: §3.4.3). It is likely that at least some of the people involved in these structures knew one another well. The buildings span the diversity of structures and biographies in a 66th century neighbourhood. As I discussed in Chapter 2,

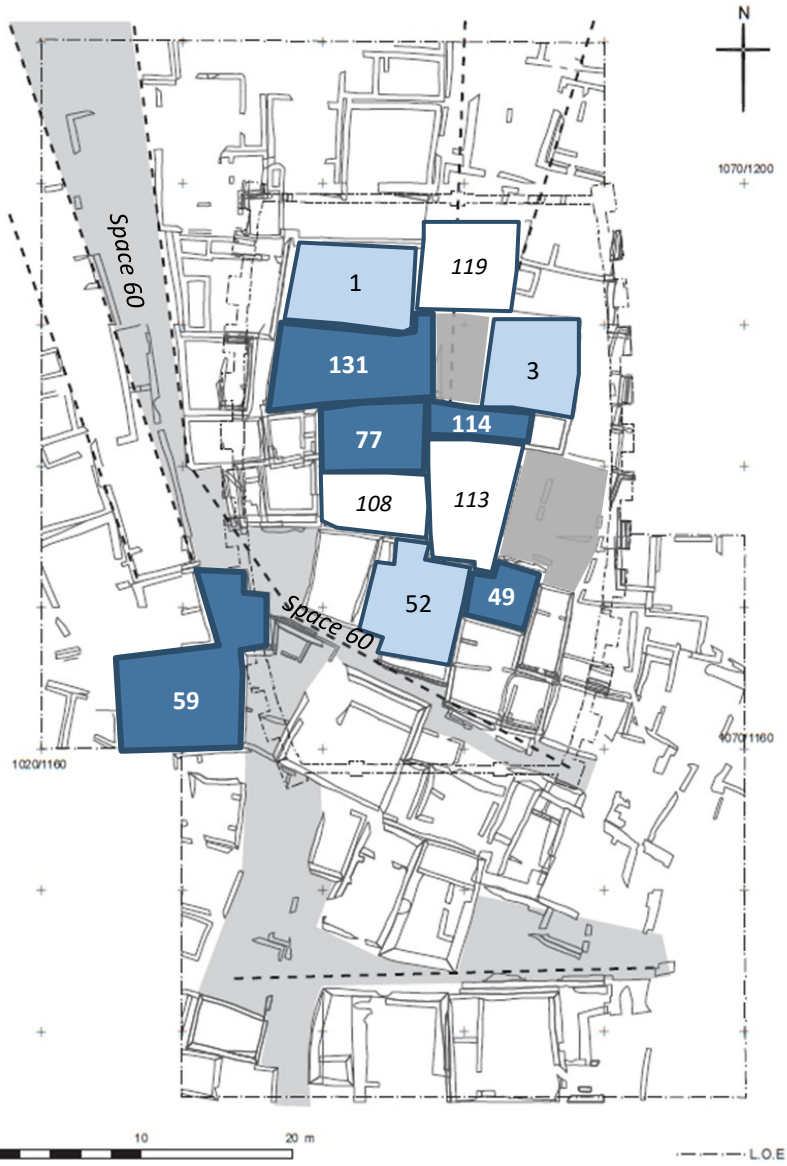


Figure 5.1. Plan of the North Area excavations at Çatalhöyük, with buildings discussed in this chapter highlighted. Dark blue: full biographical analysis; light blue: coarse biographical information only; white: other buildings mentioned. Base image used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

however, the political dynamics of Çatalhöyük at this time remain unresolved (§2.4.4). Addressing houses as part of material politics can add much to the picture.

5.2.1 Building 49

Relative timeline: Appendix A.4. Excavation report: Eddisford (2013).

Building 49 is a small structure comprising a rectangular main room (Sp. 100) and a narrow strip of space along the west side of the building (Sp. 334). It was built atop an earlier structure on the same plan, Building 84. Based on ridges and platform edges created over the

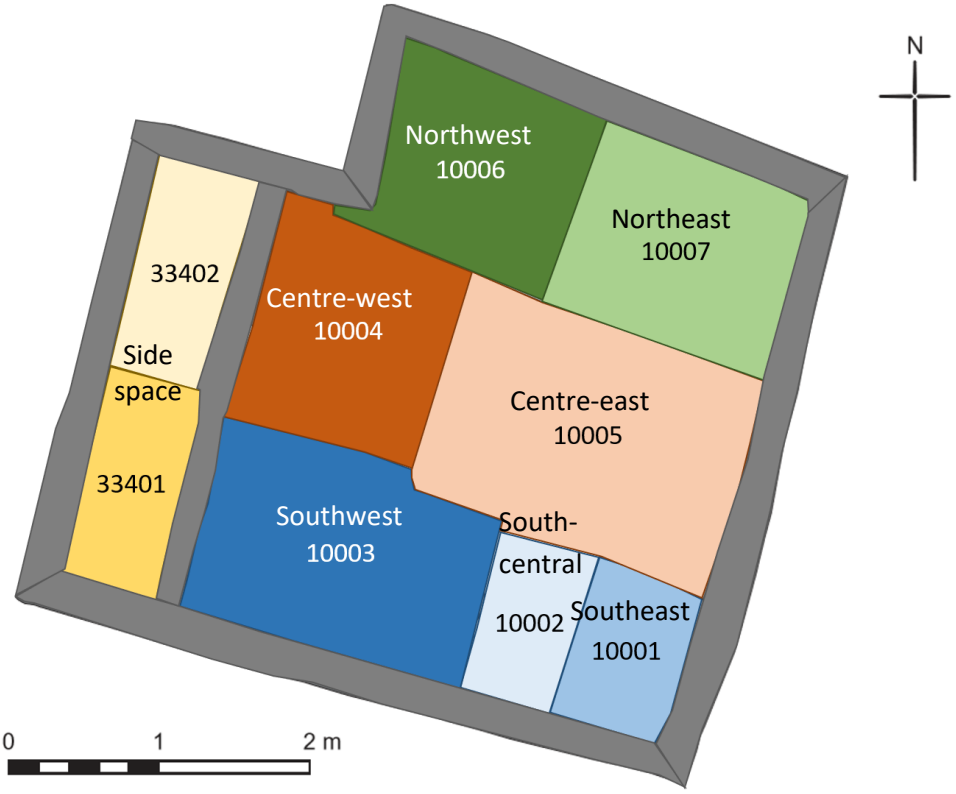


Figure 5.2. Overview of Building 49, with segments labelled and colour-coded. Redrawn from a plan by Camilla Mazzucato, Cordelia Hall and David Mackie.

life of the building, I have divided it into 8 segments, which provide spatial control in the timelines and appendices (Figure 5.2).

The south end of the house contained a small platform at the ladder's base in the southeast corner, and a low bench protruding from the east wall. Initially, a low ridge projecting from the south wall and a mudbrick bench projecting from the north wall divided the main space from Sp. 334, while an east-west ridge divided the southern 1/3 of the main space from the central part of the room. A period of use and modification occurred before any fire installation was added to the building's interior. After this, hearths were repeatedly filled and rebuilt in roughly the same location throughout the remainder of the building's life. After the third rebuild of the hearth, a domed oven was built into the wall underneath the entry ladder. This was used for some time, then packed with clay and turned into a niche. The oven's closure certainly happens before the end of burial and the closure of the side space (see below), and likely long before the end of Building 49's occupation.

Floors to the west and south of the hearth accumulated more quickly than other parts of the house's floor, leading to the unusual 'organic growth' of a platform in the southwest. After a time, the rising floors were scoured out and a formal platform (an enclosing rim packed full

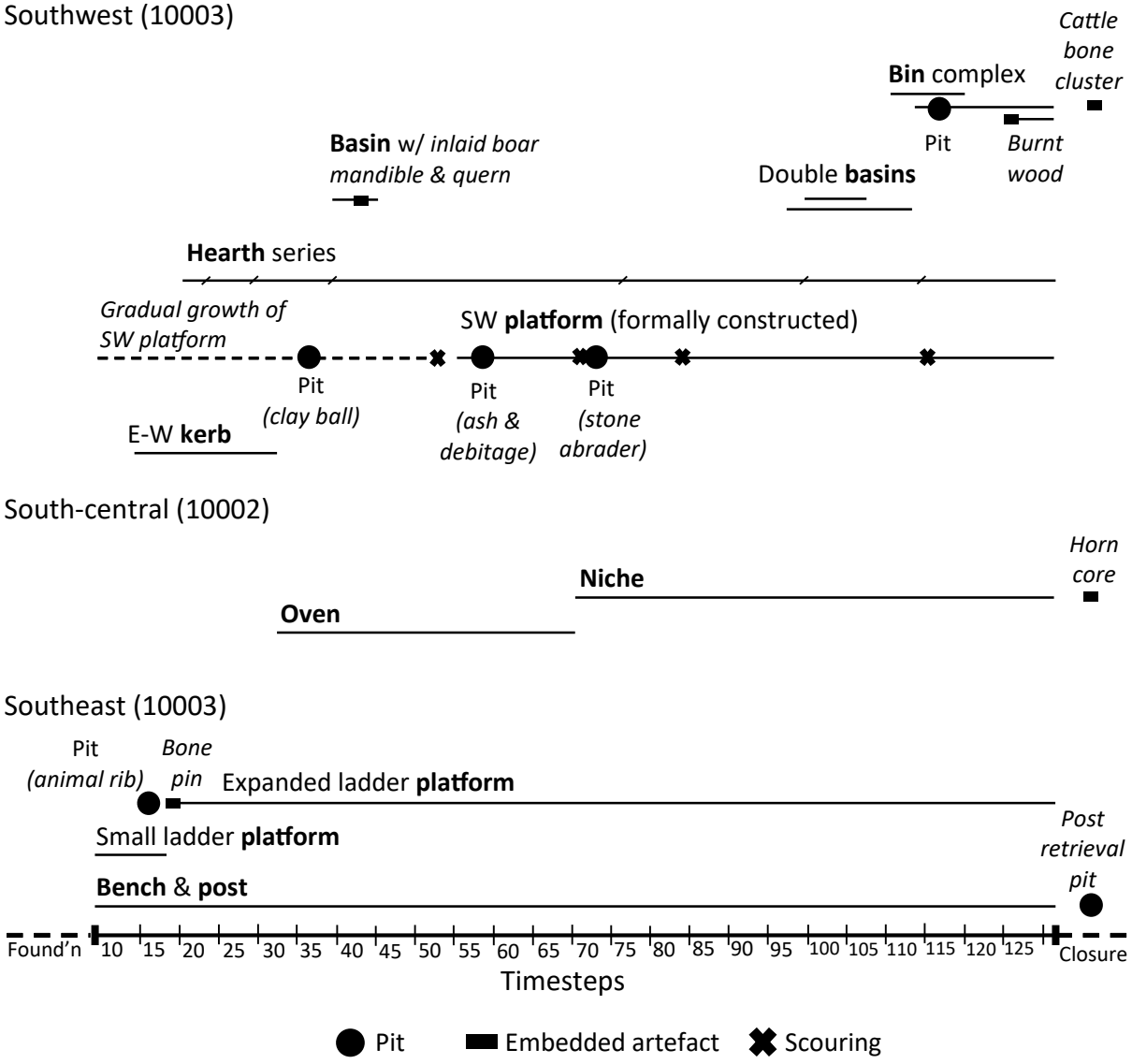


Figure 5.3. Timeline. Features in the south of Building 49.

of brown clay and coated with plaster) was built in the area. Multiple shallow scouring cuts in the platform surface suggest that floors and ash layers continued to build up rapidly in this part of the house.

Other features in the south of the building include an elongated basin fitted with a small inset quern on one end and the mandible of a boar at the other. A double basin built later in the same location was truncated during a floor scouring episode. Artefact deposition occurs in pits and feature construction throughout the south of Sp. 100, with a focus on the area behind the hearth. The artefacts deposited in these pits (a cluster of debitage; a large clay ball; a stone abrader) are quotidian items; however, all are conspicuous enough that it is unlikely their incorporation into the space was accidental. In the later part of the building's occupation, a bin complex, starting with one small bin and expanding to a larger double bin,

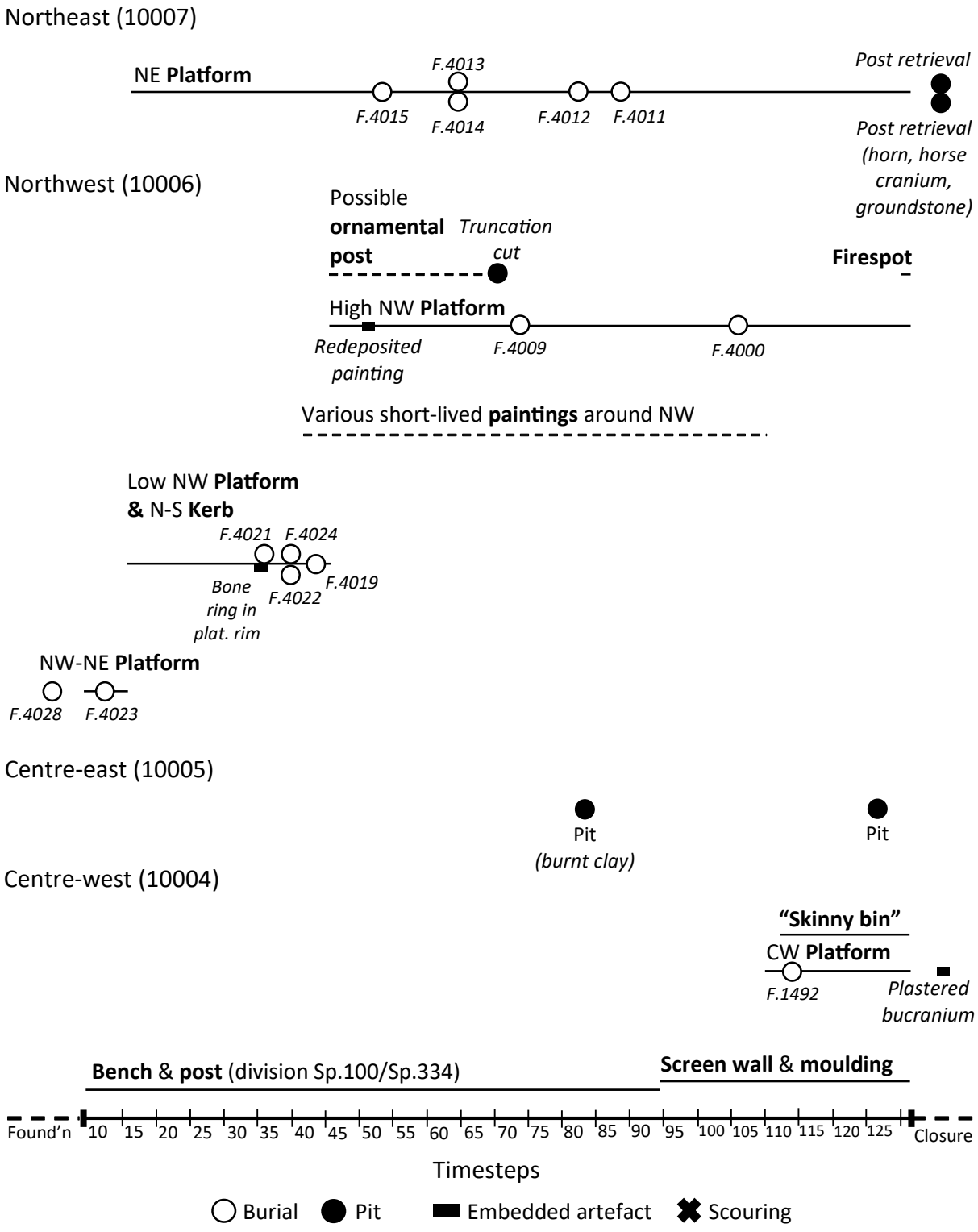


Figure 5.4. Timeline. Features in the centre and north of Building 49.

was installed behind the hearth. As part of its final expansion, a burnt post was embedded horizontally in the construction. Building 49 was never burnt; this could be a fuel remain, or possibly a memento from a burnt structure elsewhere.

Feature	Human remains	Other material culture	Taphonomic events suggested	Segment	Cut TS
4028	Infant	Body in basket; shell containing red pigment		10006	7
4023	Infant	Body in reed mat; painted shells, bone spatula, blue pigment, organics (pouch?), stone bead anklet, shell bead necklace, copper bead and twine necklace	Animal disturbance	10006	11
4021	Older Adult Female		Head removed after decay (during later interment?)	10006	35
4022	Juvenile ca. 10 years	Phytoliths (wrapping?)	Head removed after decay (during later interment?)	10006	39
4024	Middle Adult Male	Shell, small basket containing yellow pigment	Extreme flexion (dessicated?)	10006	39
4019	Adult ?Male (torso and disarticulated remains) Possible second adult (articulated foot bones only)		Head removed. Disturbed by later burial and animals.	10006	43
4015	Juvenile ca. 3-5 years	Basket(?) containing yellow pigment		10007	53
4013	Juvenile ca. 8-9 years	Basket(?)		10007	64
4014	Juvenile ca. 8-9 years			10007	64
4009	Juvenile		Head removed. Upper body disturbed by later burial, redeposited in F.4000.	10006	73
4012	Infant		Animal disturbance	10007	82
4011	Adolescent	Bead necklace; flint sickle		10007	88
4000	Young Adult Female Infant (ribs only)	Bead necklace; groundstone axe		10006	105
1492	Older Adult Male		Perimortem limb removal	10004	113

Table 5.1. Burials in Building 49.

The middle part of the main room initially comprised a flat expanse of 'clean' plaster floors. In the north, one large, low platform spanned the entire north wall. This was bifurcated into two platforms with a north-south ridge early in the building's life, and then the northwestern platform was elevated high above its neighbour with a thick plaster rim and a new core.

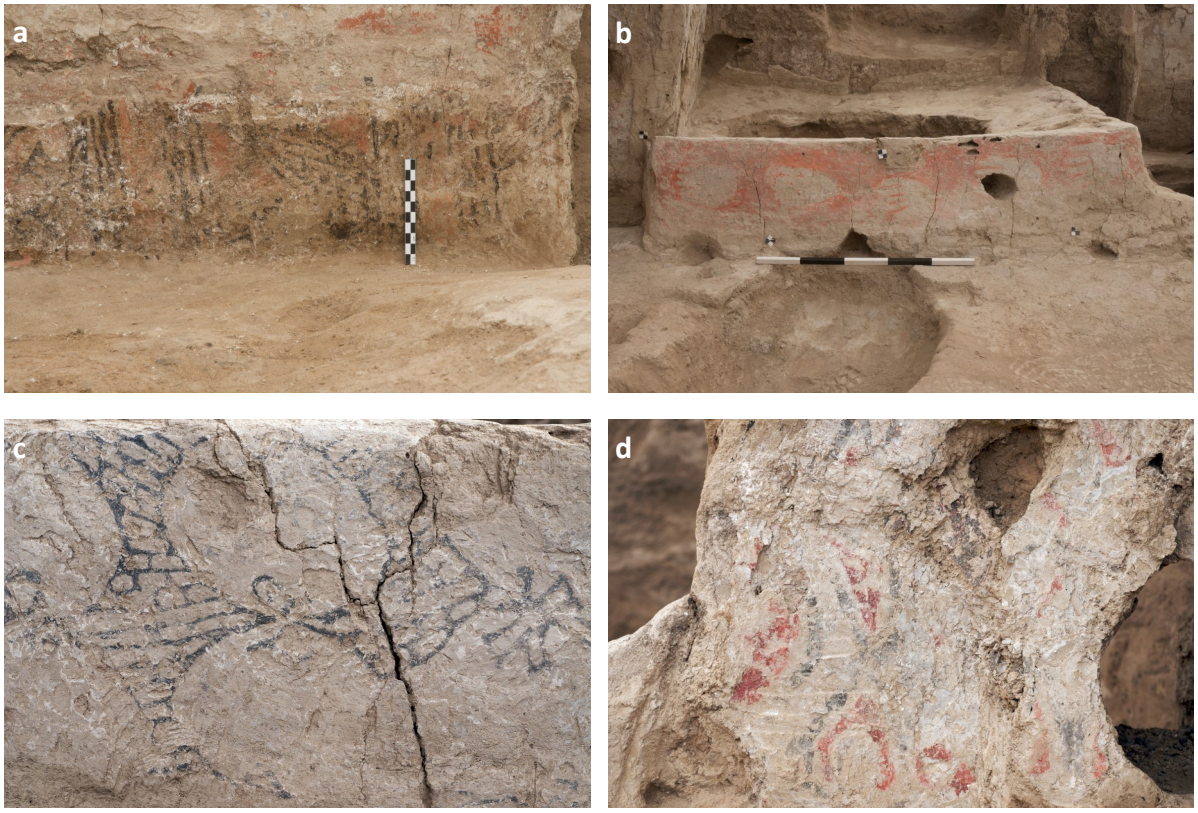


Figure 5.5. Paintings in the northwest of Building 49, Sp.100: (a) on northern wall above platform. (b) & (c) on platform face. (d) on post at division between Sp.100 and Sp.334. Photos used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

Sequential burial in the northwest corner began with a foundation burial and continued until the high platform was built; only two burials cut through the high platform structure. All burials in the northeast platform postdate the construction of the high northwest platform, and predate the final burial in the northwest, suggesting that the burial phase in the northeast was shorter-lived. In total, there were eight primary inhumations containing individuals of all ages in the northwest platform (as well as an isolated, articulated adult foot and the ribs of an infant)(Table 5.1). Few crania or mandibles were retrieved from these graves, and many individuals' cervical vertebrae were displaced, suggesting that as burials were intercut, skulls from previous inhumations were retrieved. Five individuals, all subadults, were buried in the northeast platform in non-intercutting graves.

The walls, platform faces and a post along the north wall (at the division between the main and side spaces) were decorated with a series of intricate and unique geometric designs, superimposed one above the other with a few white plasters between (Figure 5.5). Stratigraphically it is impossible to link these paintings directly to individual burials; however, they all occur within the same timeframe as the burials and may have been executed as part of the funerary process.

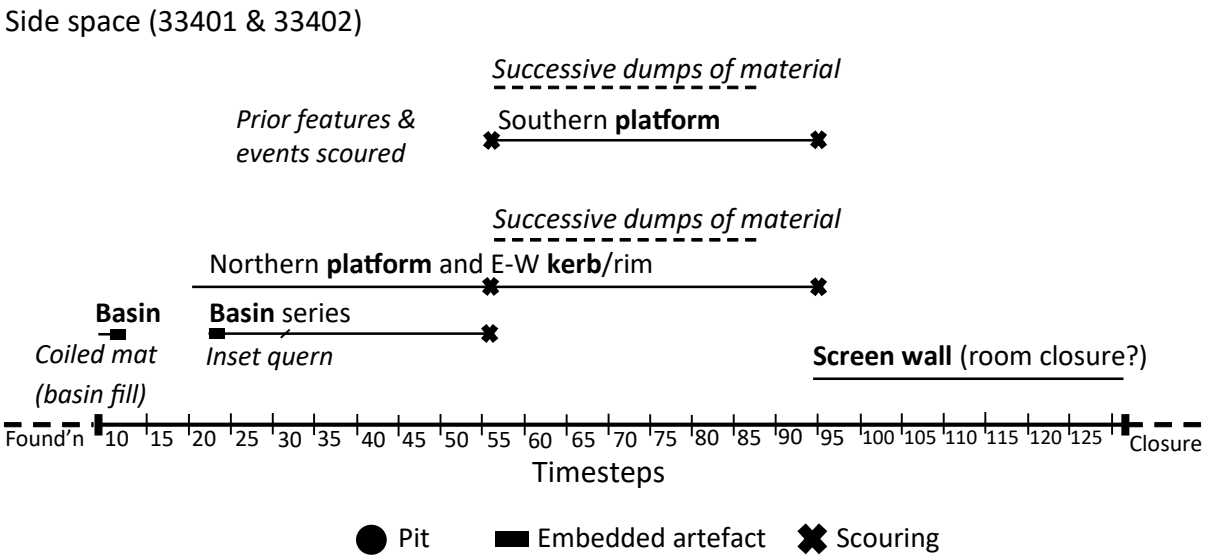


Figure 5.6. Timeline. Features in the side space of Building 49.

Occasional stratigraphic links crossed the low ridge between Sp.100 and Sp.334. In its early occupation Sp.334 appears as a normal Çatalhöyük side space, housing a series of plaster basins, one with an inset quern. The area likely functioned as a space for food-processing tasks and storage (but recall that, in its earliest manifestation, there was nothing with which to *cook* food inside Building 49).

Activities in Sp. 334 changed following a major scouring of the floors. A series of dumps of material culture built up in the space, with a few interleaving packing and plaster layers (Figure 5.7). The dumps included articulated animal remains, heavily weathered aurochs bone, unusual fauna like turtle shells, a large number of groundstone and worked bone tools, and many zoomorphic figurines, all within an ashy matrix. Specialists suggest that this is a mix of midden material (but perhaps of a 'special' character, including a high density of large fauna) along with insertions of fresh feasting remains and other material culture (Eddisford 2013, 321–326). After a period of repeated deposition of this nature, white plaster floors accumulated in a thick layer in the side space.

The organization of space across Building 49 transformed in the later part of its sequence, beginning with Sp.334 (Figure 5.8). A plaster partition wall was erected atop the bench and kerb that originally divided the two spaces. Both in photographs and excavators' record of the stratigraphy, it is clear that the partition sits atop plaster layers on the bench that are continuous with the latest white floors in the side space. No floors lipping up to the west face of the wall were noted. In other words, the last known flooring laid in Sp.334 precedes the construction of the partition wall. There is no evidence of a door or crawlhole through the

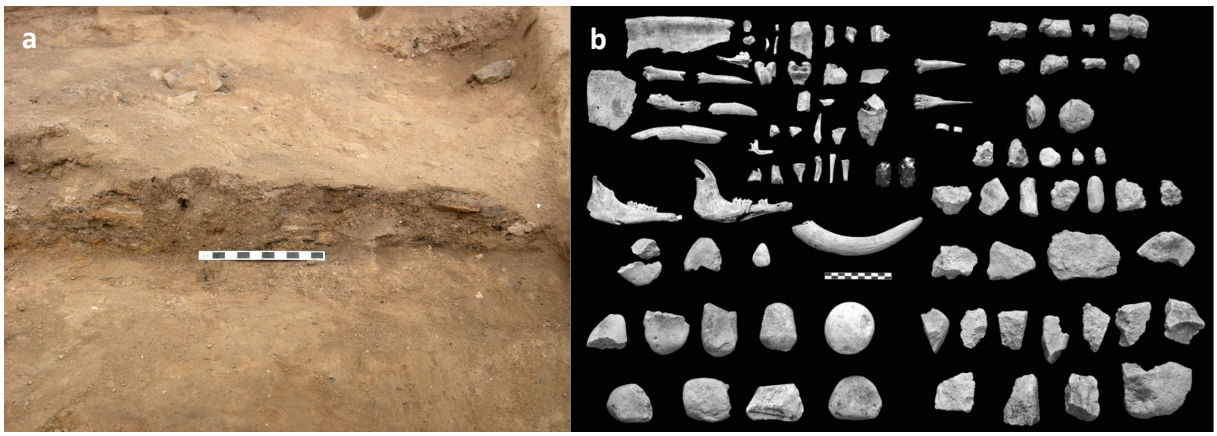


Figure 5.7. (a) Section through one dump of material culture in an ashy matrix, Building 49, Sp.334. (b) Artefacts recovered from material culture dumps in Sp. 334. Photos used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

partition wall, although a badger den has obliterated a substantial portion of it. Either before or after the wall's erection, the thick white floors in the side space were scoured out, leaving only scraps around the perimeter of the space. Two scenarios are possible. Eddisford (2013) suggests that the side space continued in use after the erection of the partition wall, but the space was no longer plastered, and the floors were scoured at closure. Given the stratigraphic evidence and increasing recognition that side-spaces at Çatalhöyük were often added or closed partway through buildings' sequences (Barański et al. 2015), the simplest explanation is that Sp. 334 was closed by the erection of the new wall. In any case, it is clear that the dynamics of activity in both spaces of Building 49 were greatly transformed by the partition wall.

In the main room, a new platform was erected in the centre-west below the newly-built partition. The body of an older adult male, articulated but lacking limbs, was buried in the platform core during construction. Above this, a geometric plaster sculpture was moulded on the new wall, and an unusual plaster feature resembling a tiny bin was formed at the dogleg in the north wall. A fragment of plastered bucranium found in the building rubble above the centre-west platform may also relate to sculptural elaboration there. Shortly after the western platform's construction, the final burial in the northwest platform — an adult female buried with the ribcage of an infant on her knee and a stone axe beside it — was executed. There was no further burial or painting in the house thereafter. The double basins and large bin complex in the southwest corner all post-date the partition wall, and may represent a shift in storage and food processing activities from the side space to the southwest (and there is phytolithic evidence for food processing atop the northeast platform after burial ceased: Eddisford 2013, 339).

Figure 5.8. New features late in Building 49's use life. Facing southwest. (a) Double bin in southwest corner of the main room. (b) Screen wall and geometric sculpture blocking off side space. (c) Burial F.1492 in the core of the new centre-east platform. (d) Burial F.4000 in the northwest platform, marking end of burial. Photos used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

Building 49 thus passed through multiple configurations over its life, with several distinct phases. These include a relatively sparse early period; a phase of intensive burial, deposition and painting activity; and a smaller, more cluttered space in its final years with no ongoing burial or painting but several sculptural elaborations in the centre-west.

5.2.2 Building 59

Relative timeline: Appendix A.5. Excavation report: House (2013b).

Building 59 was built atop an earlier, unexcavated Building 83. It was connected to an annex, Sp.276, protruding outward from its northeast corner, raising the structure's total

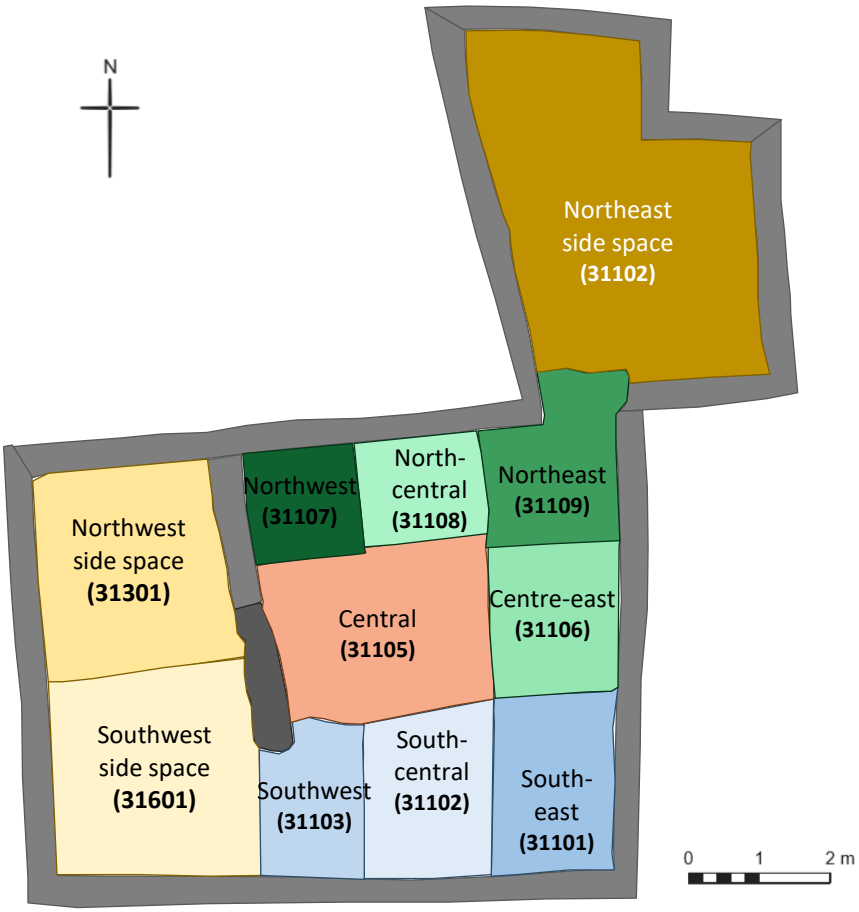


Figure 5.9. Overview of Building 59, with segments labelled. Redrawn from a plan by Camilla Mazzucato, Cordelia Hall and David Mackie.

interior dimensions to a particularly large 50m^2. Building 59's three side spaces were connected to the main room with doorways, rather than crawlholes. This allows the side rooms' sequences to be stratigraphically linked to the main room, and seems to have affected the design of the space in the Neolithic: whereas side spaces in most houses were narrow, dark areas primarily used for storage and messy food processing tasks, in Building 59 the main kitchen area is in the southwestern side room, and the remaining two side rooms were spacious and easily accessible, used both for storage and depositional activities.

During construction, special focus seems to have been given to the northwest side space, Sp.313. The only burial in the structure, an adult female without grave goods, was interred in the foundation packing in this space. A wall of Building 83 below was left protruding a few centimetres above the first floors, forming a small ledge or bench along the north wall; this was treated with a brilliant white plaster, then gradually overtopped by accumulating floor deposits before further features were added to the space. Sp.313 was subsequently fitted with a changing assemblage of bins.

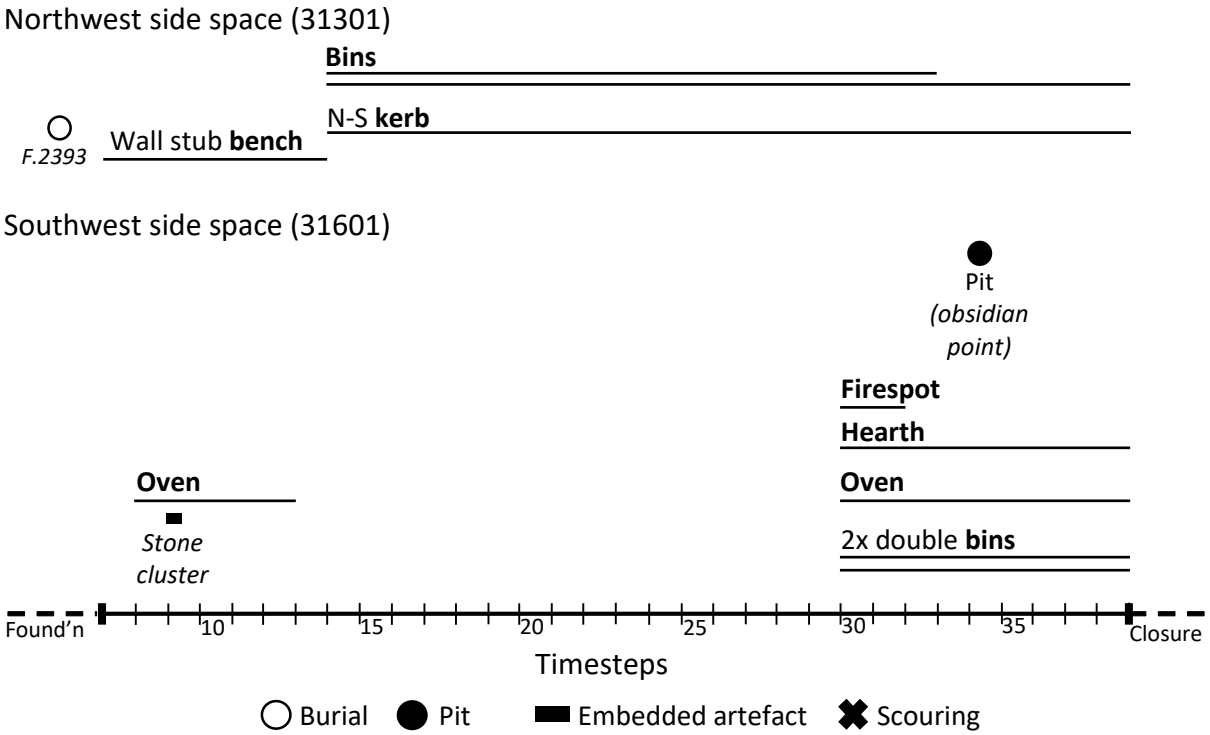


Figure 5.10. Timeline. Features in the western side spaces of Building 59.

The southwestern side room, Sp.316, initially contained a domed oven built atop the first floors in the building. After some time, the oven was truncated to its base and covered over by floors. A series of major levelling events, floor accumulations, and alterations throughout the building occurred before another oven was built, along with a hearth in the far corner and a pair of double-chambered bins (Figure 5.11). There is thus a substantial period during which there was no discernible fire installation in the structure, despite clear ongoing inhabitation.

The main space of Building 59 was initially plainly furnished. A small platform sat at the base of the ladder entry in the southeast, divided from the northern part of the space by a bench. Two platforms were built along the east wall north of the bench (the centre-east and northeast segments) and a third platform spanned the north wall (northwest and north-centre segments). Low mudbrick thresholds marked the doorways into Sp.316 in the southwest and to Sp.276 in the northeast. During the use-life of the original oven, a platform was built in the southwest corner, and during the subsequent 'ovenless' phase a smaller platform or bench (badly truncated at closure) was built protruding off of this in the south-centre. A series of burnt lenses where the southwest and south-central platforms met reflect a small, unstructured hearth. This went out of use when the new oven was built in Sp.316 or shortly thereafter. Several small pits filled with inconspicuous rubble were dug in the south of the space before and during the use of the hearth; this activity ceased once the hearth was closed.

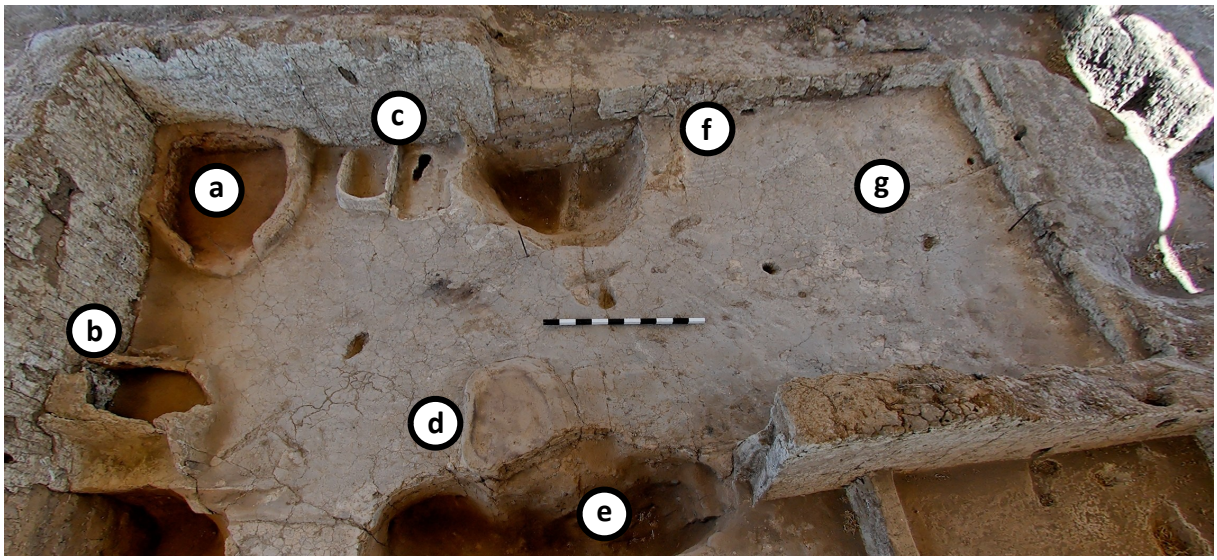


Figure 5.11. The western side spaces Sp.316 (left) and Sp.313 (right) late in Building 59's life. Features indicated: (a) domed oven; (b) & (c) double bins; (d) hearth; (e) three-post feature/screen wall (removed); (f) bin (g) north-south kerb. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

Above the centre-eastern platform, traces of black and red paint were interspersed through the earliest wall plasters, suggesting periodic painting. After this, the wall was painted with a solid red stripe or panel; excavators state that 'the stripe was conc[e]ived early in the building[']s life and continued through to its abandonment' (Unit Sheet 13481)[1]. A crack formed between the centre-east and northeastern platforms as the clays shifted over time; unmodified stone fragments were packed into this crack before it was sealed with clay makeup and new floors. A truncation cut in the northeast platform suggests that a small post protruded from its western flank for a time; although excavators did not pinpoint the addition of the post stratigraphically, the photographic record suggests that it was built in as a part of a new plaster edge, U.14686, as plasters below this were not affected by the retrieval cut. The removal cut itself is sealed by late floors in the building showing that, whatever ornamentation or function the post provided, it was removed some time before the end of occupation.

The northern platform was divided after some time by raising the northwestern segment as a high, rimmed platform (at right in Figure 5.14). A small cluster of unmodified stones was buried in the platform's rubble core. Truncated plaster pillars rested on both flanks of the platform; although it is unknown what their superstructure looked like, the arrangement is

[1] Field recording sheets can be accessed at http://www.catalhoyuk.ege.edu.tr/database/catal/Search.asp.

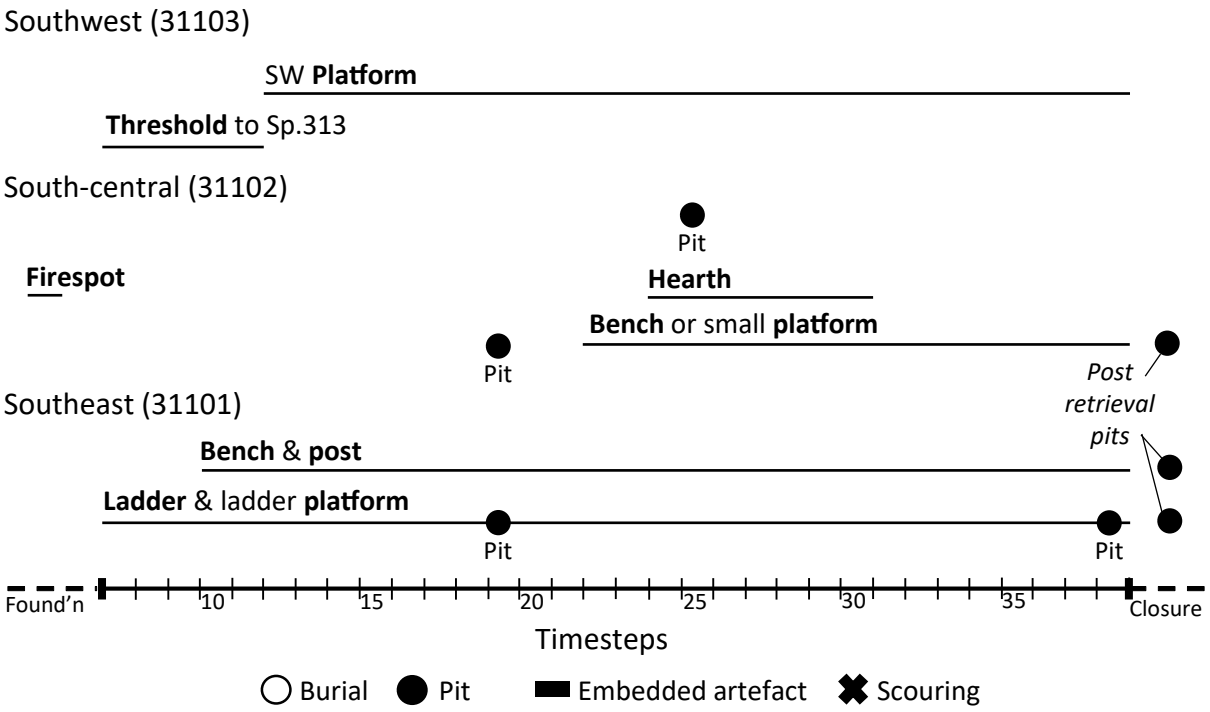


Figure 5.12. Timeline. Features in the south of the main room, Building 59.

similar to the horned pillars flanking the main burial platform in Building 77 (see below) and some platforms in Mellaart's drawings. Despite its visual similarity to the burial platforms in Buildings 77, 49, and 114, there are no burials within the platform and no further embedded artefacts. The plaster pillars were removed, likely at the building's closure.

The annex Sp.276's walls sat atop the stubs of an earlier free-standing structure in the area, possibly a small separate house contemporary with Building 83. Major scouring late in Sp.276's use life makes its sequence difficult to understand. It is clear that, atop its first floors, a set of three bins was built, with a cluster of burnt groundstone fragments embedded below. These bins continued in use until the end of the sequence. Around the eastern and southern walls, surviving scraps of the subsequent floor sequence contain multiple clusters of embedded objects, including unmodified stones and a pair of stalactites from a cave. Late in the sequence, the floors were scoured out down to the earliest surfaces; a thick (5mm) brown floor was laid in the room *after* the scouring, and the space may have been used for a short time before demolition.

Building 59's history is thus unusual in several regards. A substantial part of the building's occupation saw a complete lack of cooking facilities. The creation of an informal hearth in the south-central main room seems to go hand-in-hand with major refashioning of the platforms around the main space, which in turn predates the creation of a full kitchen in the southwest room. No burials were made during the building's use-life, and most deposited

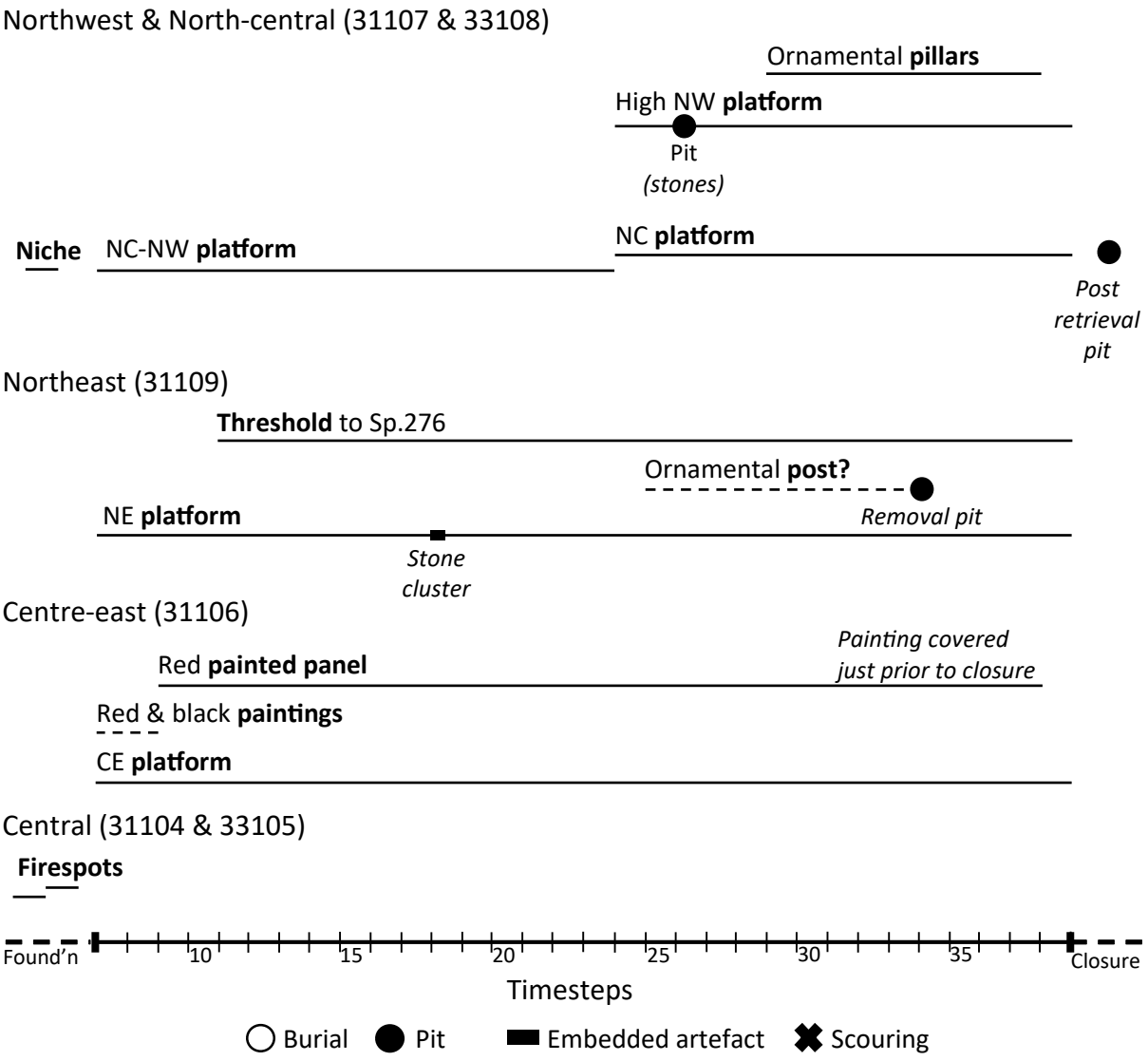


Figure 5.13. Timeline. Features in the northern and central main room, Building 59.

Figure 5.14. Building 59, main space (Sp.311), late in occupation. Facing southwest. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

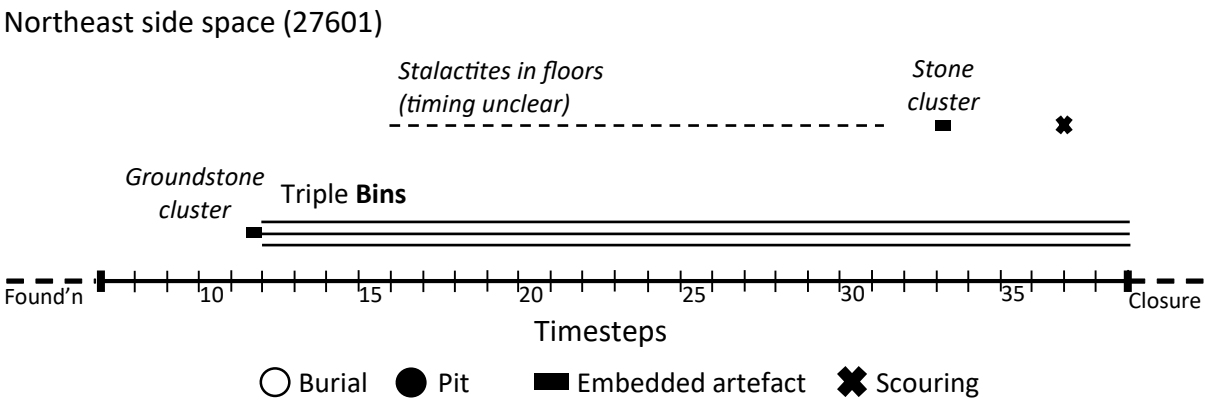


Figure 5.15. Timeline. Features in the northeastern annex of Building 59.

artefacts seem to be unremarkable stones. Yet the structure's platforms were visually similar to burial platforms elsewhere and apparently strikingly decorated during the latest phases, and the central-eastern wall was painted throughout occupation. In other words, at various points in its occupation, space-making in Building 59 drew on some, but not all, of the possibilities for built space that are evident in other houses in the area.

5.2.3 Building 77

Relative timeline: Appendix A.6. Excavation reports: Eddisford (2011); House (2013a); Tung (2012a, 2013a, 2014a, 2015a).

Building 77 comprised one main room (Sp.336) and a side space to the west (Sp.337) (Figure 5.16). It was one of two buildings built atop the midden area that had gradually infilled the massive, abandoned Building 132. Prior to Building 77's construction, this midden was used as an outdoor cemetery space (Table 5.2). Further burials were made as part of the construction process (Table 5.3). In particular, two subadult individuals were buried in graves cut into the top of the northern and eastern walls of the building below, masonry which had long posed structural problems for the people of the North Area (Klimowicz 2017).

The southern part of the main room contained metabolic features, including hearths, ovens, bins, basins, and querns, at various points in Building 77's life. The ladder entry descended onto a small platform in the southeast, and the southwestern corner was also raised as a platform. A bench protruding from a post on the east wall directed movement past the series of ovens and hearths. Platforms stood in the centre-east, northeast, and a low platform

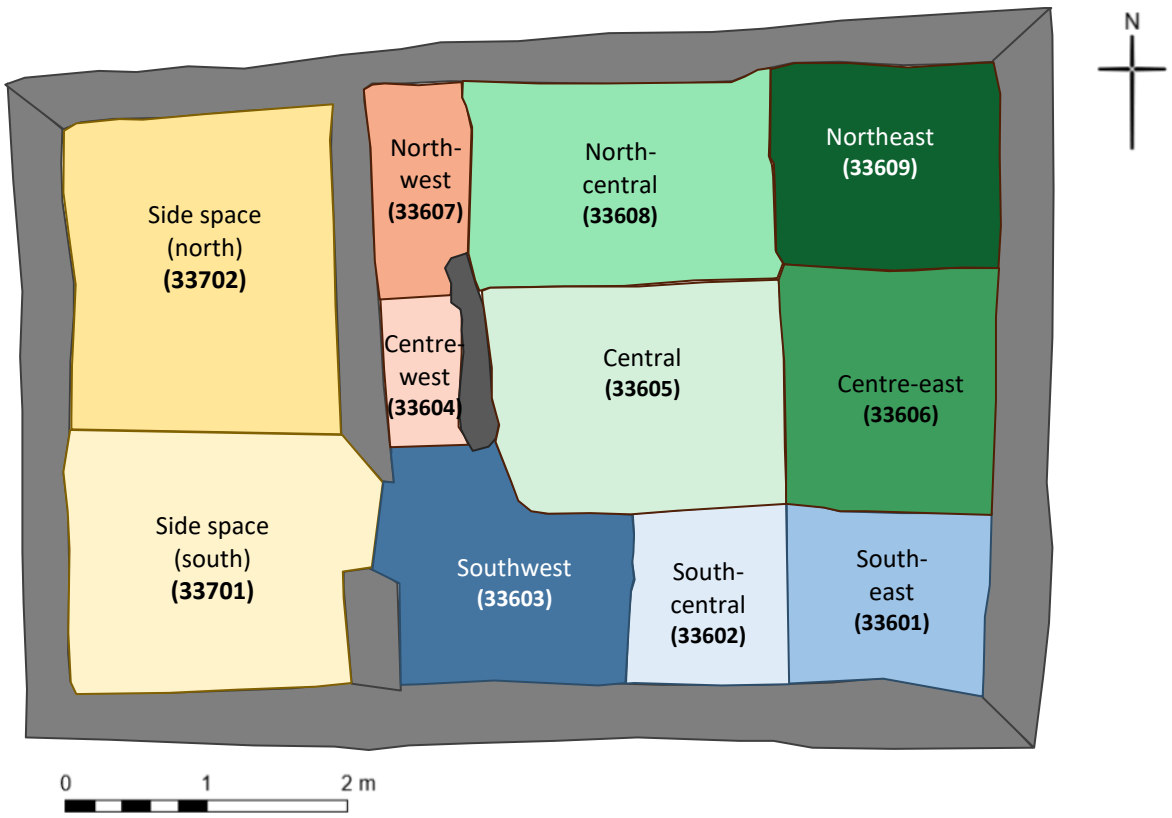


Figure 5.16. Overview of Building 77, with segments labelled. Redrawn from a plan by Camilla Mazzucato.

spanned the north-centre and north-west segments; in their initial form, these platforms were unornamented. In the far northwest corner stood several bins at the beginning of the sequence, while in the centre-west, a row of three posts separated a narrow 'channel' from the rest of the room; for most of the building's life, the space behind this feature was filled with bins or otherwise blocked off for movement. The side space, Sp.337, contained two large bins along the north wall, a round free-standing bin, and three low basins along the south wall (the westernmost of which appears to have been used sporadically as a hearth); these features appear to have been used throughout the building's life, and represent a particularly well-furnished storage and processing area.

Within this basic framework, furnishing and deposition shifted over the course of the building's use-life. In the south, an oven was cut into the centre of the southern wall contemporaneously with the first floors. After this first oven was disused, a series of hearths was created in front of it, while a new oven was cut into the southern wall west of the original oven (Figure 5.18a). After a time, ovens were built atop the original oven base as well. Although the stratigraphy here is challenging, it appears likely that at points these adjacent oven sequences were in use simultaneously. During the two-oven phase, other food-

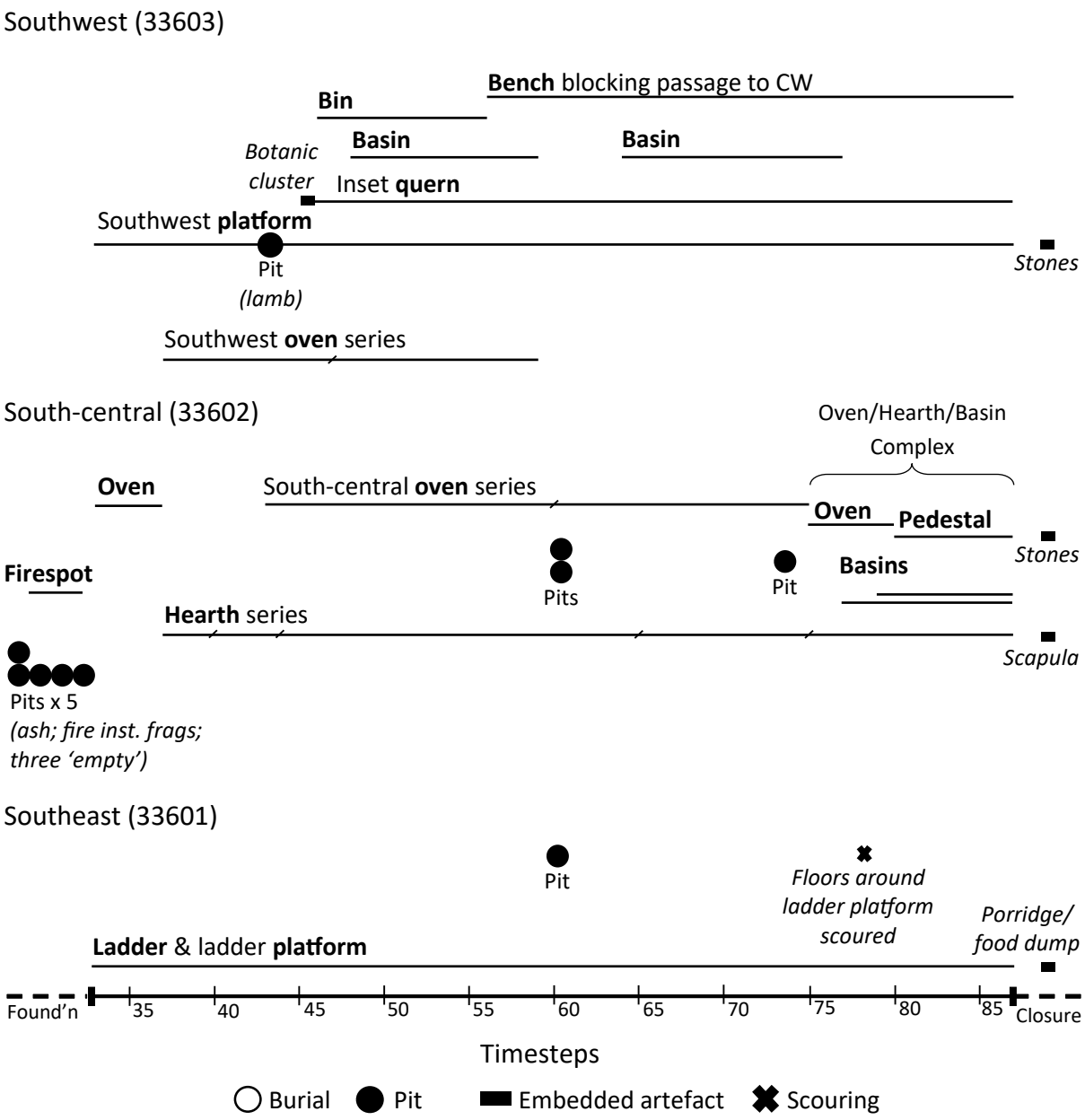


Figure 5.17. Timeline. Features in the south of Building 77.

related features were installed atop the southwest platform: a long basin next to the western oven; a bin tucked behind the three-post feature; and a large quern inset into the platform (with a cluster of botanical remains below it). A partially-articulated lamb was buried in a small pit in the southwest platform during this time.

In the later part of the building's life, the various features around the south-central and southwest segments were closed (with the exception of the quern) and an integrated complex comprising a free-standing oven, a hearth directly in its mouth, and a double bin/basin along its west side was built. After a time, the dome of the oven was removed and the feature was packed with clay, becoming a small, low, pedestal behind the still-active hearth.

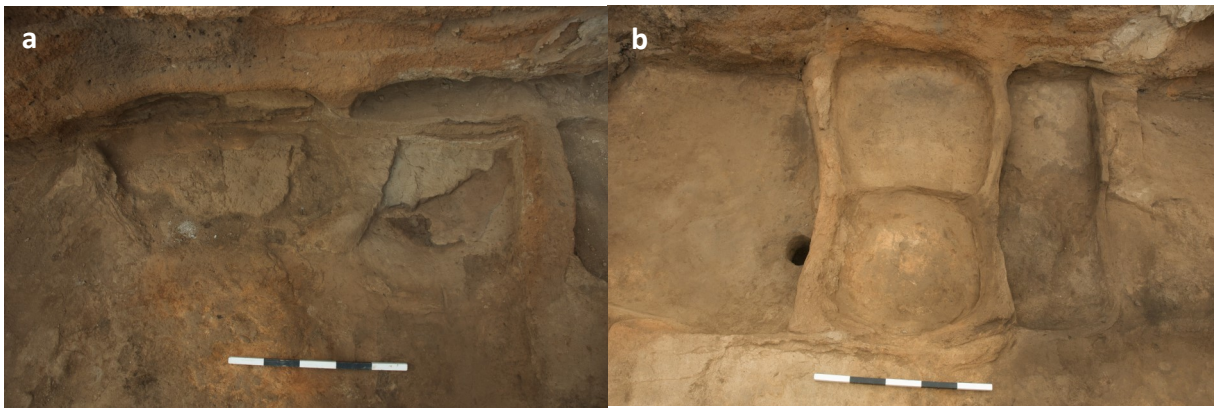


Figure 5.18. (a) Side-by-side series of truncated oven bases, Building 77. (b) Integrated oven-hearth-basin feature, later in Building 77's use-life. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

Two bins in the northwest corner of the building were truncated and covered over as the north-central platform was extended all the way to the western wall. After this, the northwest corner was further elevated slightly, forming a narrow platform F.3611. Late in the building's life — stratigraphically, after the final burials and ornamentation of the platforms and walls to the east (see below) — a large plaster wall was erected in the northwest, protruding out onto the north-central platform and wrapping around the three-post feature in the centre-west. Excavators suggested that this was a massive storage bin, although with the suggestion that the three-post feature supported a loft it may be that this screen wall supported the loft and closed off the area below it.

The north-central, northeast and centre-east platforms were the sites of many burials, including a substantial number of foundation burials. Each platform contained individuals of all ages, although there is a notable focus on burial of infants or multiple burials of adults with infants/juveniles in the north-central platform (Table 5.4). Red painting intermittently adorned the east wall above the northeast platform during the burial sequence. Two scars over the northeastern platform attest to unknown sculptural elements in this area, that were likely added during the burial phase or even at the beginning of occupation. Above the centre-east platform, a lump of clay containing an obsidian point was wedged against the post at the bench's base, then plastered over; such features, where embedded artefacts are sealed into walls as a lump, are referred to (following Mellaart's questionable sexual interpretation) as 'breasts'. A narrow 'skinny bin' similar to the one in Building 49 was built on the north-central platform. Adjacent to this, a clay panel with incised geometric designs was affixed to the wall, and repeatedly painted, creating a long-lived display. Two infant burials in the north-central platform appear to cluster up against this panel.

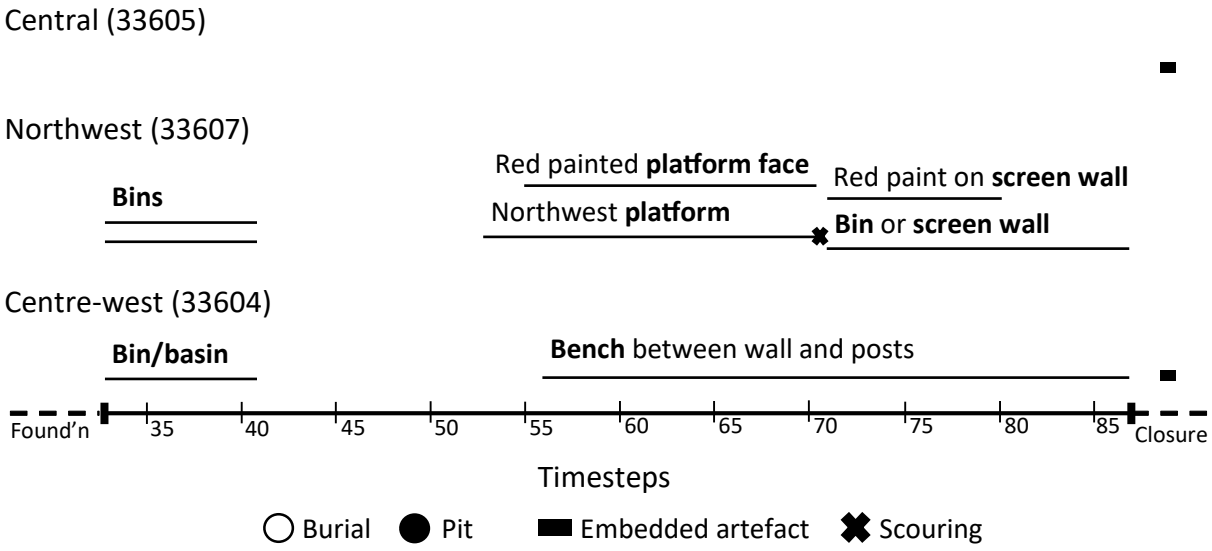


Figure 5.19. Timeline. Features in the centre-west and northwest of Building 77.

Figure 5.20. Large plaster bin or screen wall in northwest of Building 77, with burnt three-post feature at bottom-left. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

Major changes in the northern part of Building 77 occur later in the sequence. Two pillars were erected on the flanks of the northeast platform, with massive aurochs bucrania atop them pointing inward (Figure 5.22). A third smaller bucranium was affixed to the north wall, above a niche that was painted bright red. Painted plasters scoured off of walls (likely in Building 77, but possibly elsewhere) were deposited in a layer atop the platform, and sealed by a new floor. Further wall paintings around the platform, including red handprints, added

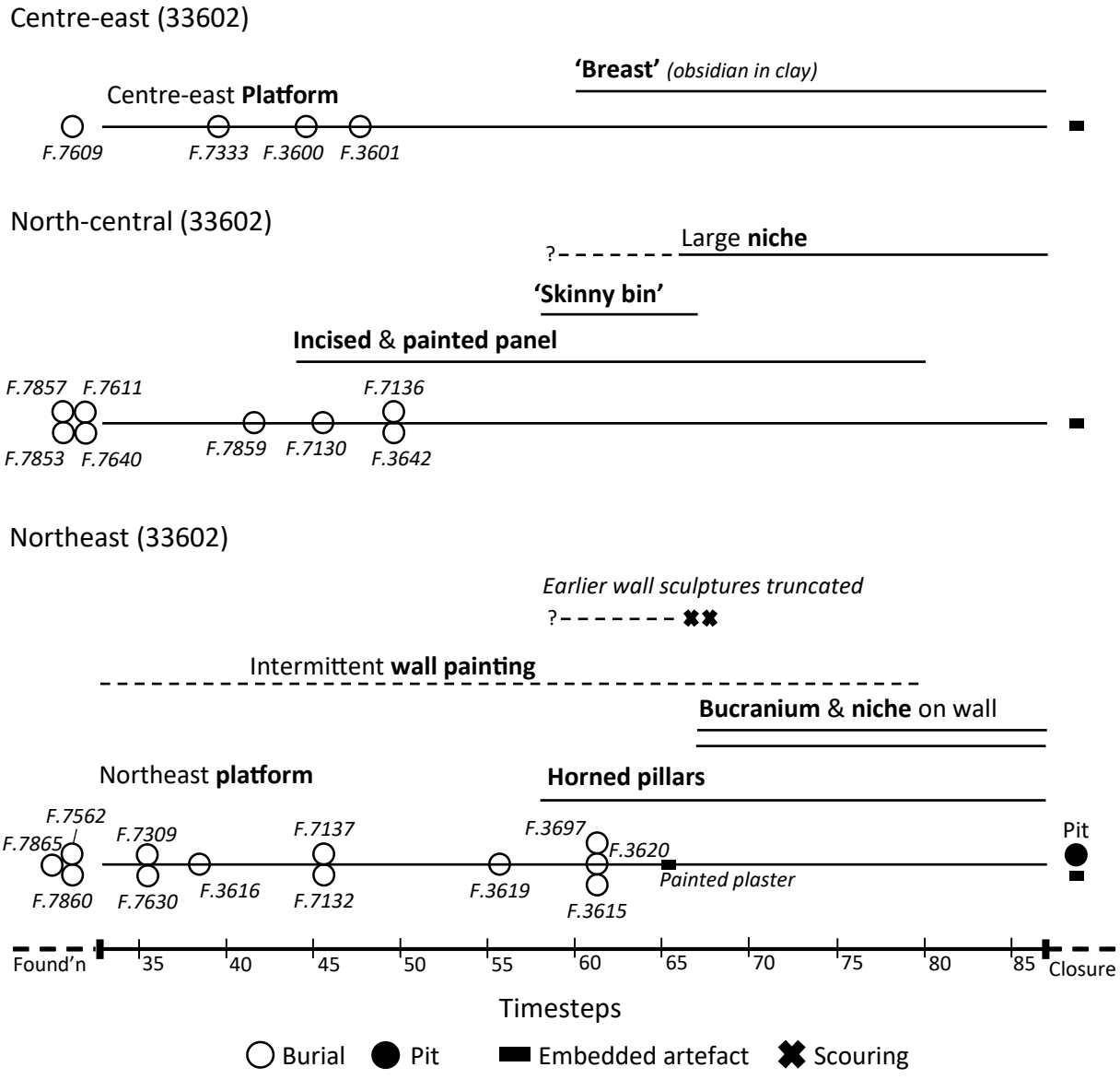


Figure 5.21. Timeline. Features in the north and east of Building 77.

to the dramatic effect. Only three burials in the building are stratigraphically later than the horned pillars, and all of these cut through the first layer of floors after the pillar construction. A primary inhumation of an adolescent included a bag of beads, white stone and a stalactite, a wooden object and a cord-wrapped skeletonized cranium. Two fully-disarticulated but neatly arranged adult males in the same pit are a likely secondary inhumation. An old adult female cranium was buried in a small pit, set atop a small groundstone palette with cinnabar powder on it; this cranium still contained residual organic matter and so was likely buried soon after death. Thus, the northeastern area was the scene, in a short span, of extravagant activities — and then burial in the building ceased[2].

[2] It is stratigraphically possible that burial in the centre-east platform continued after the horned pillars were added, but the thickness of floor deposits atop the last burial suggests an earlier end to burial in this platform too.

Feature	Human remains	Other material culture	Taphonomic events suggested	Segment	Cut TS
7863	Adult Female	Stone beads, organic body wrapping	Delayed burial	33608	1
7864	Adolescent		Delayed burial	33608	1
7633	Infant	In basket, organic body wrapping	Delayed burial	33606	1
7634	Older Adult Female	Organic body wrapping, green pigment on body, pendant, basket, articulated sheep/goat limb, organic pouch containing: several chert blades, each of a different bright colour; obsidian projectiles; bone points; shells	Delayed burial	33605	1
7632	Young Adult ?Male	Fishhook, harpoon, pendant, stone beads, flint dagger, all bundled in a mat	Delayed burial	33606	4

Table 5.2. Burials in open-air burial cluster, Sp.602, prior to construction of Building 77.

Figure 5.22. Displays in Building 77. (a) Northeast platform late in the building's life, showing horned pillars, bucranium and niche on wall, and scars where earlier elements have been removed. (b) Incised painted panel on the north wall. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

Feature	Human remains	Other material culture	Taphonomic events suggested	Segment	Cut TS
7857	Adult Female		Head removed before burial	33608	18
	Neonate		Placed on Adult Female's chest		
7853	Older Adult Male			33608	21
	Neonate (missing cranium)		Delayed/secondary burial; cranium removal before burial; placed on Adult Male's pelvis		
	Infant ca. 2 years	Bone pendant on cranium	Slightly delayed burial (some phalanges missing); placed on Adult Male's chest		
	Adult ?Female (cranium and mandible)	In basket with infant cranial fragments			
	Infant (cranium fragments)	In basket with Adult ? Female cranium and mandible			
7611	Juvenile ca. 2-4 years	In basket/cord binding	Disturbed by later burials	33608	26
7640	Infant	In basket/textile		33606	26
7865	Neonate		Disturbed by later burials		
7609	Infant	In fur bag, cord binding		33609	31
7562	Infant	In basket, shell beads and shell full of red pigment		33609	33
7860	Adolescent	Stone beads, shell pendants	Cut into E wall B132	33609	33

Table 5.3. Foundation burials in Building 77.

After the end of burial, the area remained lavishly painted for some time, but the latest wall plaster layers are unadorned. The construction of the large bin or screen wall in the northwest occurs after the last burials, and coincides with the final paintings on the incised painted panel, which spill over onto the bin/wall. Although there is no stratigraphic link to provide certainty, the relative timeline suggests that this is around the time the once-bustling kitchen area to the south was simplified, eventually leaving the building without an oven. Several major scouring events stripped out floors. Although the dramatic horned pillars and other sculptural elements in the building remained, then, the impression is that the vitality of the building had significantly changed by its latest occupation. The duration of this phase

Feature	Human remains	Other material culture	Taphonomic events suggested	Segment	Cut TS
7309	Middle Adult Male	Stone beads, stone palette with pigment residue	Rodent disturbance	33609	36
7630	Young Adult ? Female		Cranium and legs removed during later burial	33609	36
3616	Middle Adult Female		Disturbed by later burials	33609	39
7333	Adolescent			33606	40
7859	Foetus ca. 28-30 wk.	In basket, hide wrapping, shell		33608	42
3600	Adult Female Neonate (cranium fragments only)		Entire body, except head and feet, displaced by burial F.3601	33606	45
7130	Adolescent		Cranium and mandible in-situ; large rodent burrow scrambles remaining skeleton	33608	46
7137	Adult Female	Obsidian point, greenstone axe, bone pin, stone bead, shell; green pigment on body	Disturbed by later burials	33609	46
7132	Juvenile		Disturbed by later burials	33609	46
3601	Adolescent Juvenile (cranium only)			33606	48
3642	Infant	In basket / mat wrapping		33608	50
7136	Juvenile		Rodent disturbance	33608	50
3619	Old Adult Female	String of shells	Disturbed by later burials; bone retrieval; cranium relocated onto feet.	33609	56

Table 5.4 *continues on the following page.*

Feature	Human remains	Other material culture	Taphonomic events suggested	Segment	Cut TS
3697	Adolescent Adult (cranium only)	Wood artefact; likely bag containing copper, shell, and black stone beads, a white stone, and a stalactite Cord wrapping		33609	62
3620	Young Adult Male Middle Adult Male		Secondary deposition of two bodies, neatly arranged with longbones gathered to one side and crania on opposite sides of plaster-lined pit.	33609	62
3615	Old Adult Female (cranium only)	Sits atop a stone palette with cinnabar residues	Cranium cache	33609	62

Table 5.4. *(continuing from previous page)* Burials during occupation in Building 77.

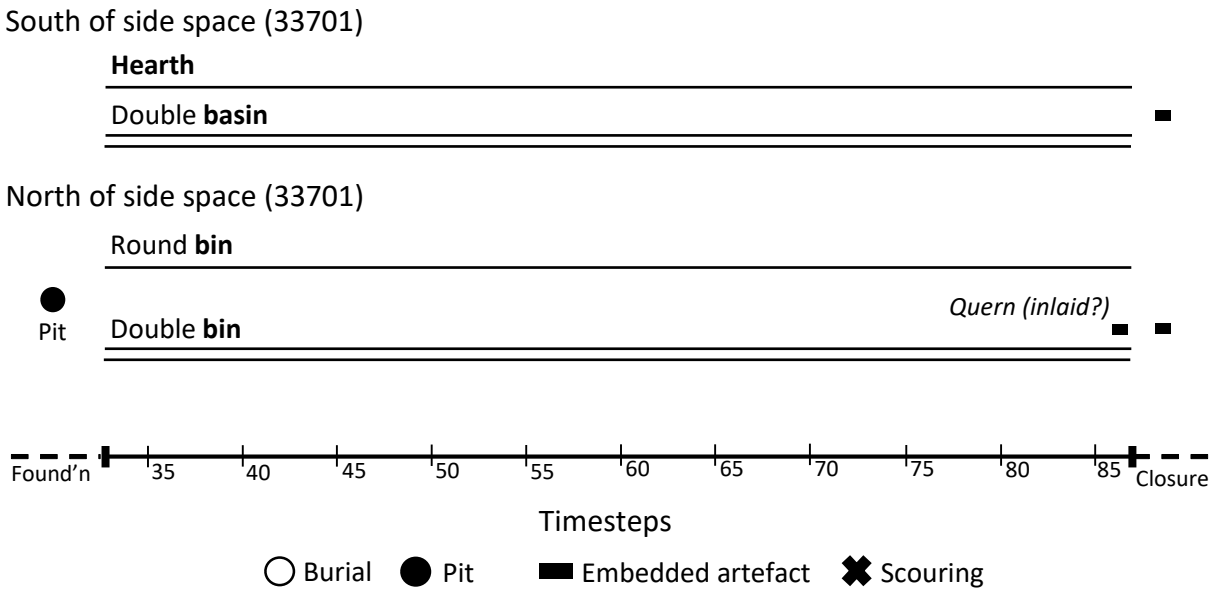


Figure 5.23. Timeline. Features in the side space of Building 77.

may have been relatively short: carbonized organic material is found around some of the latest burials in the platform, suggesting they had not fully skeletonized by the building's closure by fire. Nevertheless, the stratigraphy indicates that several changes to the space (including the bin/screen wall and numerous replasterings) occurred after the end of burial in the house. It therefore seems certain that the house was occupied for some time after the final burials and paintings were executed.

Building 77 saw one final dramatic flourish in its closure. The building was virtually coated with artefacts, including massive querns, various tools, horns, talons, scapulae and antlers of various animals, and a large mass of barley, peas and freshwater fish representing many litres of porridge or similar food. The structure was then set alight and burned at a high temperature. Every aspect of this process represents a massive effort involving broad communities in labour-intensive and sensually-striking activities, creating what was likely an unforgettable moment in the North Area's history. Building 77 was overlain by Building 12, which survived to the present only as traces of wall foundations and a single, nearly-eroded burial. However, the location of this burial—an adult female buried directly over the northeastern platform of Building 77—suggests that the spatial patterns established in Building 77 continued to play out long after the structure itself went up in flames (cf. Taylor et al. 2015).

5.2.4 Building 114

Relative timeline: Appendix A.7. Excavation reports: Tung (2012b, 2013b, 2014b, 2015b).

Building 114 is unusually narrow: almost 8m long (including its eastern side room and walls) but only 2m wide. It was constructed in the same act as Building 3 to the northeast, as the buildings' masonry interlocks at the corner (Stevanović 2012b). A third room to the east, Sp.89, has been partially excavated; it is uncertain whether it connected to Buildings 114 and/or 3, as no access has been located. Building 114 may have had another side room to the south, as evidenced by a blocked crawlhole; this room was obliterated by the construction of Building 113 part-way through Building 114's life.

Despite its unusual shape, Building 114 contained small versions of the typical furnishings for a Çatalhöyük house, including a small demarcated kitchen area, a series of ridges and platforms including a high burial platform in the corner, paintings and niches on the wall and a bin in the side room Sp.88. The northwest segment contained the ladder entry, an oven cut back into the north wall, and an open hearth southeast of this. A platform spanned the

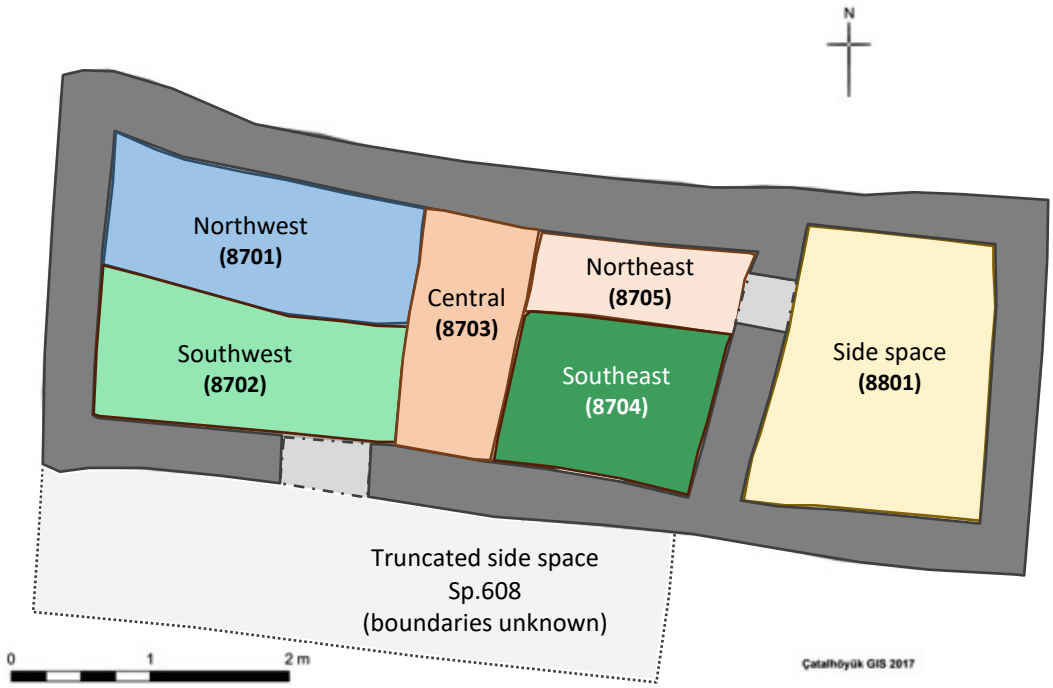


Figure 5.24. Overview of Building 114, with segments labelled. Redrawn from a plan by Camilla Mazzucato for the Çatalhöyük Research Project.

southwestern part of the room, and a crawlhole there accessed the (later destroyed) south room. A kerb divided the kitchen from an unraised but clean-floored area in the centre of the building, and a narrow unraised strip along the north wall likely led to the crawlhole to Sp.88 to the east.

A small platform in the southeast was expanded dramatically after several floor plasterings. The first floors atop the expanded platform were cut by the burial of an adult male with a hafted stone sphere on one shoulder, and an infant on the other (Figure 5.26b). Burial in Building 114 tended to pair adult with infant or subadult burials thereafter, either in the same grave, in adjacent graves cut through the same floor, or in one case in sequential re-openings of a grave (Table 5.5)[3].

The north wall was apparently an unstable construction, and was a focal point for repair practices of mechanical and depositional varieties (see Chapter 7). An unusual deposit around the beginning of occupation consisted of a mass of rodent bones, many of them partially articulated, in grey mortar packed against the lower part of the wall, west of the

[3] The southwestern platform has not been stratigraphically linked with the rest of the building, and the burials can only be roughly located in the middle of the sequence based on the fact that substantial floor sequences precede and follow them.

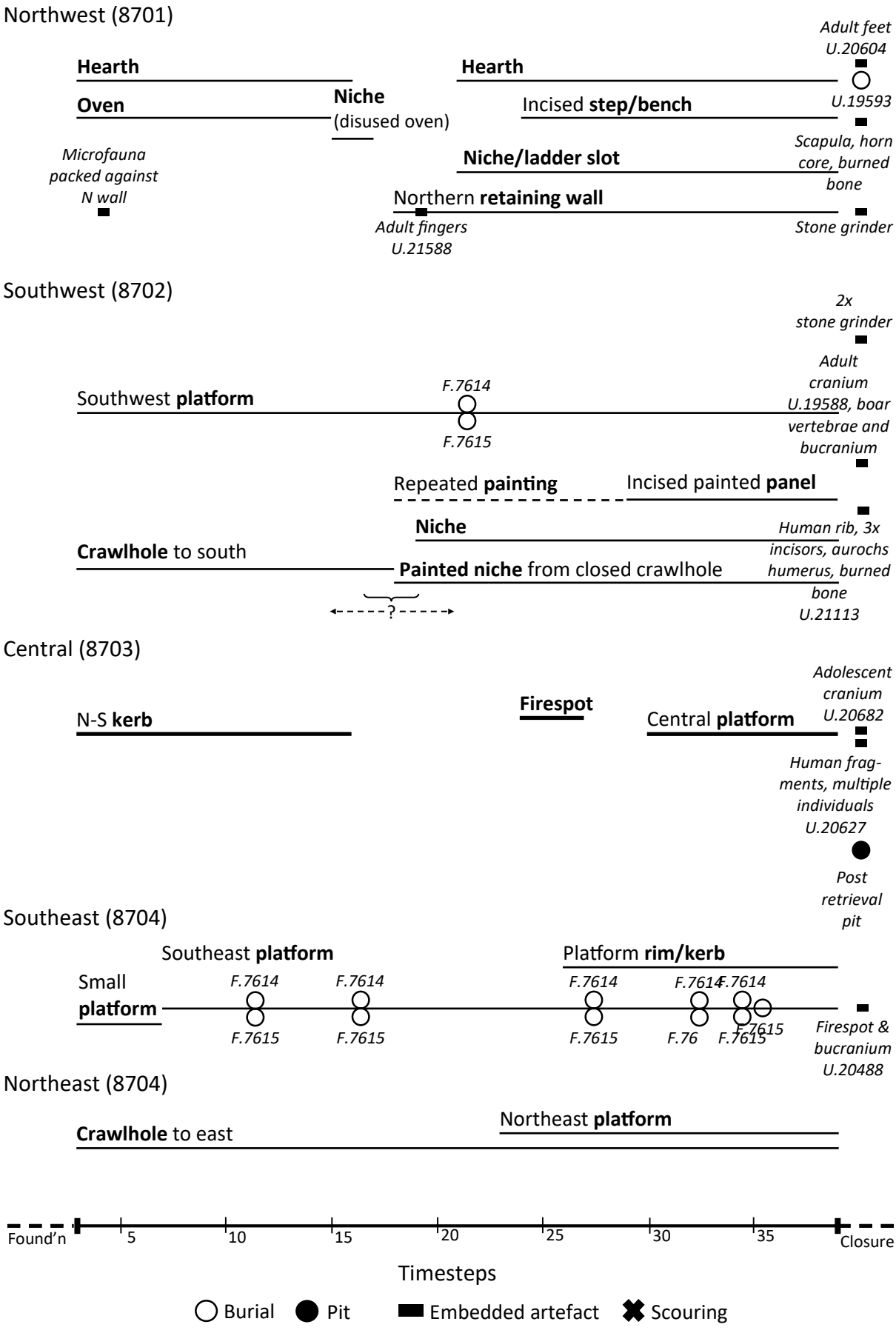


Figure 5.25. Timeline. Features in the main room of Building 114.

Figure 5.26. Burials pairing infants and adults in Building 114. (a) Adult female with infant in basket at feet, F.3629. (b) Older adult male with stone macehead on right shoulder and infant cranium on left shoulder, F.8100. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

oven. Excavators express certainty that the bones do not represent a rodent burrow (Unit Sheet 30011), and massed deposits of rodent bones are a rare but recurring phenomenon at Çatalhöyük, occurring elsewhere dumped over bodies in graves (Farid 2005b, 270-271) and packed between adjacent buildings Buildings 1 and 131 (Cessford 2005b, 521–522). Sometime after this, a new north wall was built inside the structure, apparently to shore up the building against lateral loads from the north. Three articulated adult fingers, including metacarpals, were placed in the foundation cut below the bottom course of bricks (Figure 5.27a). Closure activities also centred on the northwestern area (see below) — creating further funerary/architectural engagements along the wall.

The construction of the new north wall in Building 114 preceded several later changes. A sculpted semicircular element protruding from the wall in the southwest may represent a ‘ladder step’, a tiny bench or a symbolic ‘buttress’ (Figure 5.27b). The new wall blocked off the oven, which was never rebuilt, although the hearth was rebuilt in the same location. A scorched area in the central segment reveals a second unstructured hearth in use for a short time. The central area was then raised as a low platform. The passage in the northeast was also elevated, almost to the height of the southeastern platform. Most of the individuals buried in the southeastern platform (seven of eleven total) were interred after the new wall was built, continuing apparently until shortly before closure.

In the south, the construction of Building 113 led to the transformation of the southern crawlhole into a niche, and the cutting of a new niche near floor level just west of this. Substantial wall plastering both precedes and supersedes these events. I have thus located them in the middle of the sequence, which makes them roughly contemporary with the new

Feature	Human remains	Other material culture	Taphonomic events suggested	Segment	Cut TS
8100	Adult Male Infant	Stone sphere In basket	Cranium slightly displaced by later burial	8704	12
1014	Adult Female Infant	Ochre coated; polished bone In basket		8704	17
7614	Young Adult Female			8702	22
7615	Adult Infant			8702	22
1012	Adult Female			8704	28
1013	Infant		Disturbed by later burial	8704	28
998409	Adolescent	Bone belt buckle	Disturbed by later burial	8704	33
998494	Infant		Disturbed by later burial	8704	33
998490	Adolescent		Cranium relocated by later burial	8704	35
998410	Old Adult Male			8704	35
1005	Juvenile	Cranium of F.998490 in arms		8704	36
9919593	Juvenile/adolescent Adult(s) (two feet only)		Head and L arm removed Articulated; no other body elements present	8701	40

Table 5.5. Burials in Building 114.

north wall; however, there is no evidence to support the idea that these two major changes in the structure of Building 114 were exactly contemporaneous.

The eastern side space, Sp.88, is not stratigraphically linked to the main room sequence; no Harris matrix was available for this room. However, the Berkeley team's excavation report (Stevanović 2012b) allows its sequence to be characterized. The room was a 1.8m x 1.5m cell. It contained a bin-like feature in the south of the space, beginning in the southwest and later expanded to span the entire south wall. A small platform was a late addition in the northeast, while in the northwest a basin and inset quern suggest food processing activities. A series of clusters were deposited in pits and packing layers over the course of the room's use-life, including a bundle of animal bones and ground stone with a marine shell necklace laid atop it; a cluster of ochre lumps and potsherds; a cluster of handstones, nuts and ochre lumps; and a cluster comprising ochre, an antler tine, an obsidian blade, and a faux red deer canine bead. The crawlhole to Sp. 87 was closed at some point late in the room's use, and converted to a niche, but the room continued to be used for some time.

Figure 5.27. (a) Articulated adult fingers in construction of new north wall, Building 114. (b) Northwest kitchen area late in the structure's life, showing niche, incised step or bench, hearth, and scorching on wall above hearth. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

Figure 5.28. Juvenile body (sans head and left arm) splayed in demolition rubble of Building 114. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

The closure of Building 114 was a dramatic event that represented a flourish of social memory in diverse media. As the structure was demolished, a number of clusters were deposited. In the side room, Sp.88, the area between the niche and the quern was filled with artefacts, including cattle skulls, antlers, cattle scapulae, burnt bricks from another structure, almost two dozen burnt groundstone tools, and pottery fragments. Clusters in the main room consisted of fragmentary, weathered human remains, especially crania and teeth, accompanied by fresh feasting remains (e.g. a boar's spine and mandible) as well as highly weathered aurochs elements. The most dramatic closure deposit in the building was the body of a juvenile splayed amid the rubble above the kitchen area (Figure 5.28). The body was completely articulated, but missing its cranium and left arm. In place of the head was the

foot of an adult, with another foot set against the juvenile's lower back. The body lies in front of the spot where articulated fingers were built into the new north wall. This is thus a specific location where fully-fleshed, dismembered body parts from at least three individuals were manipulated, alongside a more generalized deposition of skeletonized and weathered human elements elsewhere in the building.

5.3 Coarse biographies of further buildings

Three further buildings of North Area Level G have been fully excavated. Harris matrices for these structures were not available for analysis. The accounts below are abbreviated and rely on published, phased accounts of structures, which represent houses' biographies somewhat differently than matrix-based methods (§3.4.2). I have supplemented this with targeted investigation of the stratigraphy as recorded in the field and discussed in relevant reports. Although providing less holistic information, this coarser investigation reveals biographies as dynamic and diverse as the structures detailed above.

5.3.1 Building 1

Excavation report: Cessford (2005b).

Building 1 was built atop Building 5, which had been (in its early life) conjoined with Building 131's predecessor by a crawlhole (Tripković 2017). Like Building 131, the construction of Building 1 began with a large pit dug into the previous building—in this case, a targeted pit ca. 1.4m in diameter suggested to have retrieved wall sculptures or other features in Building 5 (Cessford 2005b, 408). Revised radiocarbon estimates suggest that Building 1 was long lived: estimates centre around 125 years, with a 95% probability the structure was occupied for more than 60 years (Bayliss 2013, 86). Within its occupation were two phases that might better be thought of as two buildings: Building 1.2, in which the whole structure was roofed over; and Building 1.4, in which the main room was partitioned in two and the southern half converted to an open courtyard enclosed by the older walls. Dividing the two was an episode of deliberate burning and restructuring (phase 1.3).

Building 1.2 consisted of a main space plus two western side spaces (Figure 5.29). In the earliest years of its occupation, the oven was located in the main room under the ladder, while an open hearth was used in the southwest side space. Later, the oven was moved to the side space and the hearth covered over; the main space oven area was replaced with a large

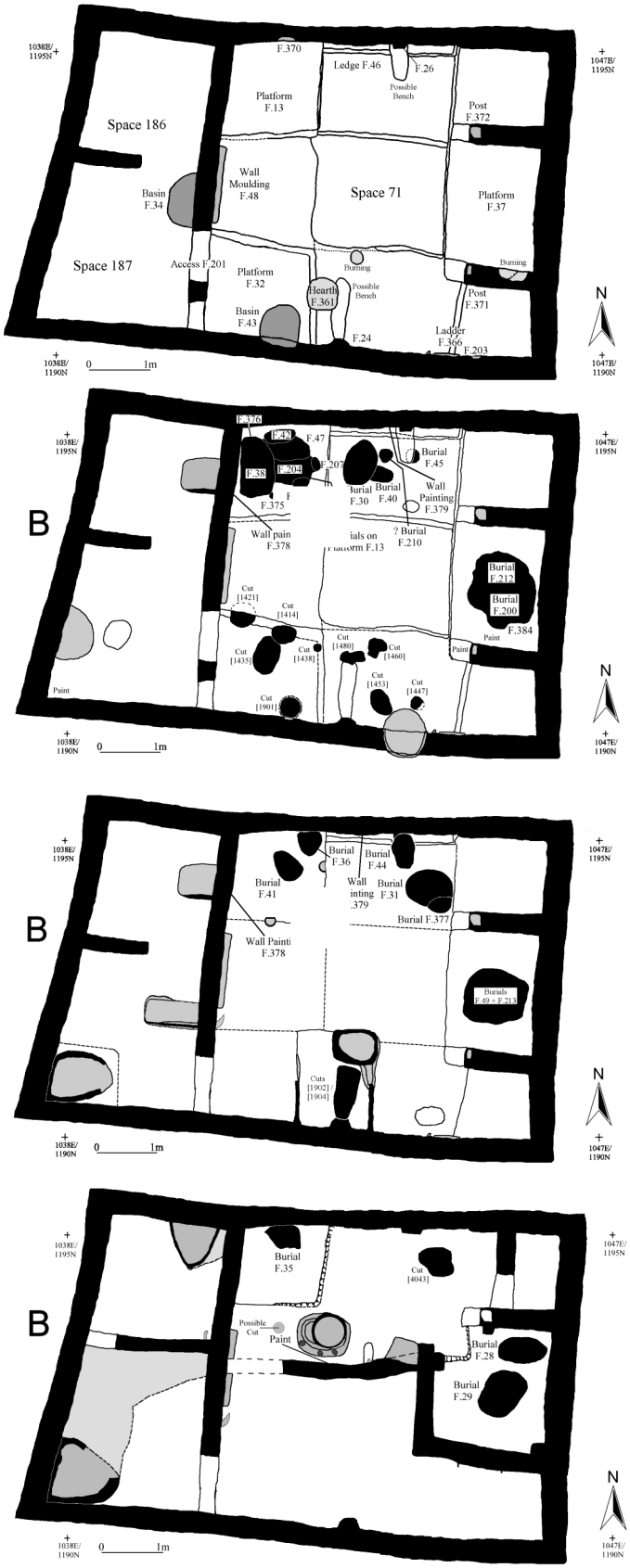


Figure 5.29. Phased plans of Building 1. (a-c) Phase 1.2. Building was burned then rebuilt as (d) Phase 1.4, with open courtyard/midden in southeast. Modified from Cessford 2005b, figs. 12.8, 12.19b, 12.38b, 12.63b and reproduced with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

bin and a basin with a quern set into it. Both side spaces also contained basins and bins in shifting configurations through their lives.

Building 1's northwest high platform, north-central and centre-eastern low platforms were major burial centres, containing at least 60 individuals. All but three were buried during phase 1.2, prior to burning and reconfiguration. During this time, the western wall was adorned with a large sculpture truncated (likely during the subsequent remodelling). Features were added, then removed from the flanks of the northwest platform, conceivably horned pillars as in Building 77. Further sculpted features protruded from the west and north walls of the main room, including a horn fixed near the side space entrance. The walls around the burial areas were intermittently painted with solid red or black washes or multicoloured geometric designs.

After widespread burning and placed artefact deposition in the southeast and the side spaces, surfaces across Building 1 were levelled off and an L-shaped wall was added, partitioning the northern and centre-east platforms from the rest of the main room. The new southern area may have served as an outdoor courtyard, while the side spaces would have been outbuildings accessed across the courtyard. The northern, indoor area saw many of its decorative elements truncated, but a horned bench affixed to the new wall. Central in this new space, a small oven was built. Fire installations (also likely ovens) were also built in both side spaces/outbuilding rooms, and the northern side space had a horn affixed to its southern wall. Building 1's final years thus saw a near-complete transformation in terms of practices and spatiality, connected with outbuildings and outdoor spaces in ways that prefigured later 7th millennium space-making practice (§2.4.3).

5.3.2 Building 3

Excavation report: Stevanović (2012b).

Building 3 was built above an earlier, unexcavated structure. It initially comprised a single room, although crawlholes in the east wall may have conjoined it with another structure (Sp.41) for a time before they were sealed off. After some time, a low bench extending from the north wall partitioned a strip of space along the building's west side; this partition gradually became more substantial, eventually separating the western strip as a side space. A series of ovens, bins and basins shifted around the south and west of the building through its early life; the south-central hearth remained largely fixed in place. Three platforms along the north and east wall were original to the building, and the walls above them were painted with

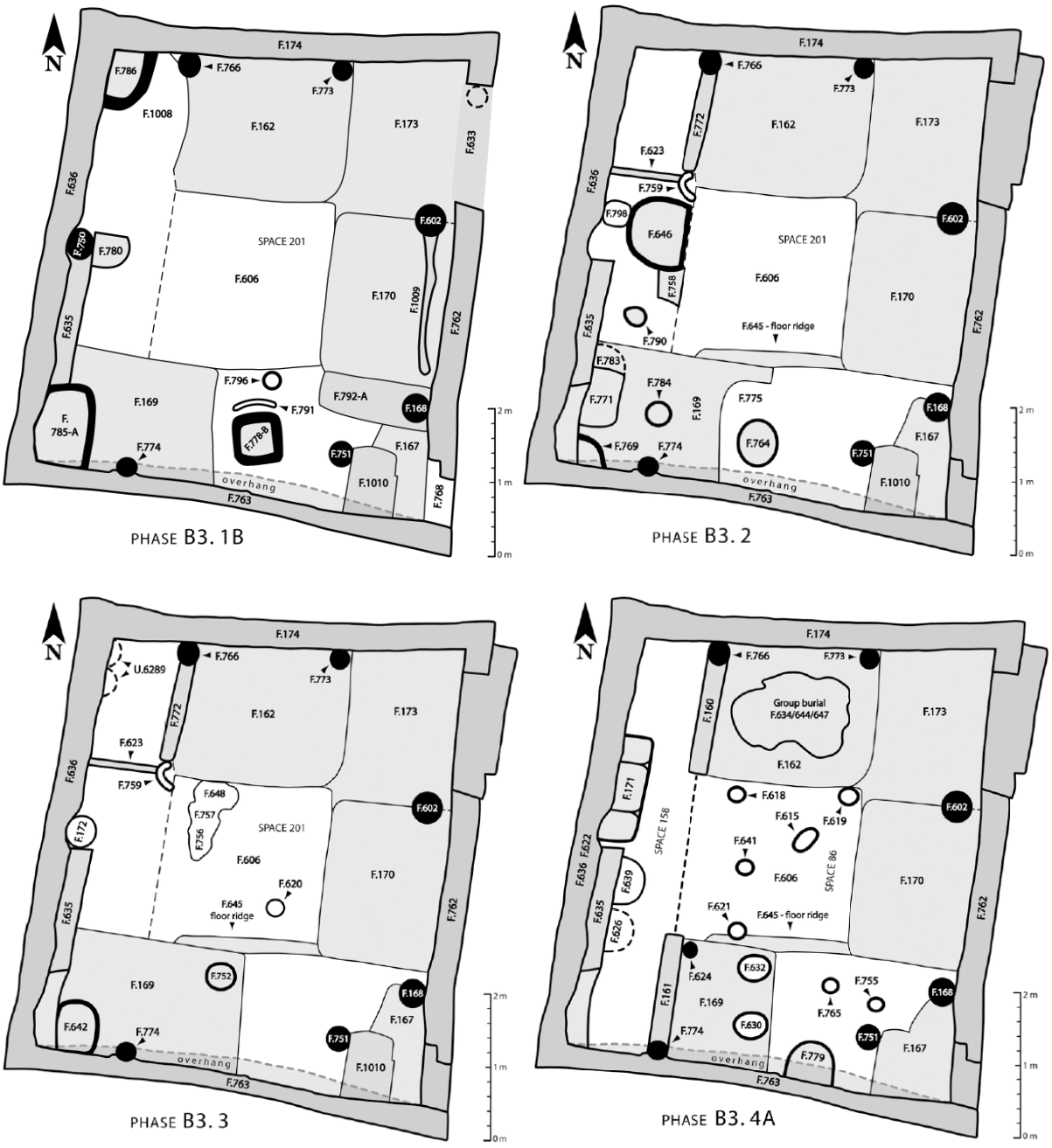


Figure 5.30. Phased plans of Building 3. Modified from Stevanovich 2012b, figs. 4.26, 4.49, 4.59, 4.70. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

red panels and geometric designs, but no burials were inserted in the earlier phases of Building 3. The eastern and western walls of Building 3 appear to have been chronically unstable, sitting on unconsolidated midden footing, and in the west a new wall was added to support the structure.

A major redesign involved the conversion of the bench/ridge between the central and western spaces into a screen wall; the oven sequence and southwest platform were moved eastward so as to remain in the main room. Around this time, burial began in the north-

central platform, along with an uptick in pit-digging (mostly devoid of artefacts) in the centre of the main room. A single human adult metatarsal is recorded in a mortar layer from the screen wall construction; this could be a mislabelling error or an incidental inclusion, although small fragments of adult bodies are sometimes incorporated into construction contexts, including Building 114 next door (cf. Kay in prep.). Painting continued during this time, and plaster collapse in the building's infill suggests a plaster moulding stood on the screen wall (as in Building 49). It is likely that the western side space was infilled after the screen wall was built, although the wall itself is heterogeneous (a mix of brick masonry, wattle-and-daub, plaster, and possibly wooden construction) and may have been built gradually in a poorly-understood process. The closure of the side space included a number of finds, including groundstone tools and cattle scapulae, and in the northwest the large bins of earlier phases were truncated and filled with burnt plaster and bricks from another building.

After a series of further burials (for a total of 8), the northern and eastern platforms were coated with a gritty grey plaster similar to kitchen area floors. A number of artefacts, including two human and one cattle crania and a large number of cattle scapulae, were left on the final floor. The roof of the building was dropped flat into the house and the walls pulled down. This rubble was then the basis for midden activity; there is no evidence of any later Neolithic structures in this location.

5.3.3 Building 52

Excavation reports: Farid (2013a); Barański (2017).

Building 52 has a unique history. Whereas in most other structures the main walls formed long-lived points of reference, creating a fairly stable frame within which space could be adapted, to the south of Building 77 walls were regularly added on, knocked through, and otherwise recombined to create a series of shifting, intercutting structures (Figure 5.31). Six building numbers have been assigned to designate temporary configurations of this complex tangle of walls to create bounded structures (Barański 2017). Building 52 itself began as a small, two-room structure, Building 167. Another structure, Building 163, to the west, was abandoned and its shell used as a sheep pen and midden. Then, the western wall of Building 167 was knocked-through and new walls erected atop Building 163, making a new, larger structure, Building 52.

Cooking features were shifted into the western rooms of the new build, while the main space was lavishly ornamented and buried within. This included a long bench protruding from the western wall, which initially had a row of goat horns protruding from it on either side. The

Figure 5.31. Overview sketch of the development of Building 52 among its neighbours. Sketch: M.Z. Barański. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

bench was later encased in clay, making a larger bench with cattle horns protruding from it (Figure 5.32). Further horns protruded from the post above this bench, as evident by the pile of collapsed plastered bucrania that fell onto the floors of this area at closure. The structure became, by some metrics, the most ornate building excavated by the Hodder project since 1993 (Hodder and Pels 2010). The high northeastern platform was regularly painted red, and three sequential, multiple burials were executed here. These included a headless young adult male buried with the disarticulated, secondary postcranial remains of a juvenile; a middle adult male with an infant cranium and mandible on his shoulder and a whole infant on his feet; and a middle adult female with the cranium and mandible of a young adult (possibly from the earlier burial) at her feet. Both the stratigraphy and taphonomic evidence suggest that this burial sequence ended some time before the end of Building 52's occupation, as all remains were skeletonized by the time of the structure's closure by fire. In the northwest platform, a large pit was dug just prior to closure; here a middle adult male was buried along with secondary remains of eight subadults (for a detailed investigation of the burials in Building 52, see Haddow et al. 2016).

Later in its occupation, the kitchen in the main space of Building 52 was restored; it is unclear whether this replaced, or operated in conjunction with, the side space kitchen. At closure, masses of artefacts were dumped in the side spaces of Building 52, with main room

Figure 5.32. Horned benches in Building 52. (a) Earlier feature with goat horns; (b) later feature with cattle horns. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

deposits centred along the west wall and the platforms. The structure was then burned. After the fire, a new wall was built along the line of the much earlier west wall of Building 167, recreating the boundaries of this original structure. The area inside this was resurfaced, furnished simply, and occupied for some time (designated Building 51).

5.4 Familiar but flexible? 'Modularity', friction and multiplicity

Every one of these eight biographies is full of rich details about the way people made space as a part of community life in the 66th century. This North Area neighbourhood not only offers the opportunity to study the biographies of a range of individual houses, but also to start drawing inferences about political dynamics that crossed multiple structures and set communities in motion. Each of the next three sections of this chapter explores a different political dimension in the 66th century. This section explores the idea that Çatalhöyük houses were 'modular' units, tracing both the real similarities between buildings' layouts and the manner in which those layouts changed. In terms I laid out in Chapter 4, it evaluates what was *integral* to a structure, both in terms of materiality and sociality, but also explores the way *friction* may have enable highly variable social entanglements with space (§4.5.1, §4.5.2). The second considers houses' changing roles in metabolic tasks, showing how 66th century people built houses that were *creatively interdependent* rather than autonomous (§4.5.4). The third pursues the tension between different ways of defining a house's with reference to social histories: one by shaping its surface through features' insistence, and one by embedding bodies, artefacts, and features below the surface (§4.5.3). In the concluding section I draw out the implications of these investigation for the site's much-debated social structure, and sketch out a way of living together with material space that characterized a particular moment in the tell's history.

Figure 5.33. The standardized layout of houses at Çatalhöyük's apogee. (a) Building 89, South Area. (b) The nearly-identical Building 119, North Area. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

5.4.1 Houses as modular units? Investigating standardization and integrity

An outsider's first impression of Çatalhöyük is often of the remarkable similarity of its houses. Many mid-7th millennium buildings look like near-replicas, not just of their neighbours but of structures on the far side of the tell (Figure 5.33). Even buildings that seem to be wedged into irregular and constrained spaces (like Building 114) look similar in many ways to large, freely-organized structures like Buildings 59 or 77. This has been related to a strong habitus of spatial organization with deep roots in the Çarşamba River area (Baird, Fairbairn and Martin 2017; Hodder and Cessford 2004), but over the centuries leading up the 66th, houses developed increasingly fine and specific internal layouts and demarcations. Rather than the bipartite plan of houses at Boncuklu Höyük, by the 66th century houses averaged over eight spatial segments marked off by ridges and changes of elevation, in most cases following similar plans. There was a clear envelope of possibility for what a 66th century house could look like: although every house had a long history of change, these changes were carried out without producing wildly diverse physical forms.

This visual similarity has been a key factor in many archaeologists' interpretation of the site as a settlement of 'modular' social units, i.e. households (e.g. Bogaard 2017; Düring 2011; Hodder and Cessford 2004). I have discussed the epistemological and evidentiary challenges of this 'summarizing' view in previous chapters, and will not rehearse that critique here. But there is a certain logic to the observation that goes beyond establishing a convenient one-to-one, house-to-community relationship for analysis. What these authors suggest is the phenomenon of *integrity* in more-than-human communities: the idea that there was a recurring 'recipe' that specified what built forms, practices, and human inhabitants made up

	Quintiles					
Building	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**Q5**	
49	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	"Kitchen" next to entry
	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Entry in southeast
	N	N	N	N	N	Other "kitchen" areas?
	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Bench betw. entry and 'clean' space
	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Platforms along wall opposite entry
	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Burials in platforms
	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	"High" platform in corner
59	N	N	Y	N	N	"Kitchen" next to entry
	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Entry in southeast
	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Other "kitchen" areas?
	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Bench betw. entry and 'clean' space
	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Platforms along wall opposite entry
	N	N	N	N	N	Burials in platforms
	N	N	Y	Y	Y	"High" platform in corner
77	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	"Kitchen" next to entry
	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Entry in southeast
	N	N	N	N	N	Other "kitchen" areas?
	N	N	N	N	N	Bench betw. entry and 'clean' space
	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Platforms along wall opposite entry
	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Burials in platforms
	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	"High" platform in corner
114	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	"Kitchen" next to entry
	N	N	N	N	N	Entry in southeast
	N	N	N	N	N	Other "kitchen" areas?
	N	N	N	N	N	Bench betw. entry and 'clean' space
	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Platforms along wall opposite entry
	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Burials in platforms
	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	"High" platform in corner
% 'Standard'	**64%**	**79%**	**86%**	**79%**	**79%**	

Table 5.6. Standardization of buildings' layouts over their use-lives. Shaded cells indicate conformity to the site-wide 'standard' of the mid-7th millennium.

a functional house (§4.5.1). If houses' built forms all followed a similar recipe, shouldn't we infer that their mix of occupants and the ensemble of practices carried out in them was also similar? And if not—if houses' roles in 66th century lives varied dramatically—then why would houses all be made to look so similar?

A biographical view confirms that houses tended to settle into a 'standard' layout. Table 5.6 shows elements of the 'standard model' 66th century house, and how each building conformed or deviated from that model over the course of its use life. To construct these tables from relative timelines, I have used a quintile system, dividing each building's occupation phase (from first floors to closure activities) into five 'slices'. For the three

Building	Start of occupation	End of occupation	
1	N	Y?	"Kitchen" next to entry
	Y	N	Entry in southeast
	Y	Y	Other "kitchen" areas?
	Y	N	Bench betw. entry and 'clean' space
	Y	Y	Platforms along wall opposite entry
	Y	Y	Burials in platforms
	Y	Y	"High" platform in corner
3	Y	Y	"Kitchen" next to entry
	Y	Y	Entry in southeast
	N	N	Other "kitchen" areas?
	Y	Y	Bench betw. entry and 'clean' space
	Y	Y	Platforms along wall opposite entry
	N	Y	Burials in platforms
	Y	Y	"High" platform in corner
52	N	Y	"Kitchen" next to entry
	Y	Y	Entry in southeast
	Y	N	Other "kitchen" areas?
	N	Y	Bench betw. entry and 'clean' space
	Y	Y	Platforms along wall opposite entry
	Y	Y	Burials in platforms
	Y	Y	"High" platform in corner
131	Y	Y	"Kitchen" next to entry
	Y	Y	Entry in southeast
	Y	N	Other "kitchen" areas?
	Y	Y	Bench betw. entry and 'clean' space
	Y	Y	Platforms along wall opposite entry
	Y	Y	Burials in platforms
	N	N	"High" platform in corner
% Typical	**75%**	**86%**	

Table 5.7. Standardization of buildings' layouts at the beginning and end of their use-lives. Shaded cells indicate conformity to the site-wide 'standard' of the mid-7th millennium.

buildings without relative timelines (Table 5.7), I simply compare each house's initial and final layouts. All of the buildings here largely conform to the standard form throughout their lives, and there is a tendency for nonconforming aspects to be brought into conformity over time, e.g. by erecting a high platform in a corner (Buildings 49 and 59) or by condensing fire-related activities into the area near the ladder (Buildings 131 and 52). Thus, houses began their use-lives with quite similar basic layouts and tended to *converge* on the 'standard' layout, rather than *diverging* as their histories took different paths.

However, if we look more closely at what precisely each segment within these standardized layouts *did*, variation reappears. The area opposite the entrance tended to comprise a series of platforms. These were often used as burial areas – but some buildings have platforms that

were not used for burial (Building 59), and others have phases in which no one was buried in their platforms (Buildings 3, 49, 77, and possibly 114). Some platforms were likely also sleeping areas, but not those hemmed in by fragile sculpture (Buildings 59 and 77), whereas the later phase of Building 49 saw a burial platform used for agricultural tasks and the last phase of Building 3 saw coarse grey floors (perhaps also indicating unusual usage) laid on its platforms (Eddisford 2013, 339). Similarly, 'kitchen' segments tend to come, go, and move about (e.g. Buildings 3, 59, 131; §5.6 below). Side spaces could be closed before the end of occupation, and segments in the main room could be devoted to storage bins late in buildings' lives (e.g. Buildings 49 and 77). Although the common form of structures provided guidelines as to how practice might be organized in a space, then, it did not specify the exact range of tasks in the house or precisely where they could be done.

Far from stable, modular social-spatial units, this examination suggests an unexpected pairing of spatial regularity with practical flexibility. As I will explore further in coming sections, the roles houses played in 66th century communities, from cooking to burial space, were *not* integral to the structures, and features that supported these activities could come and go over time. The question, then, is how spatial regularity worked to manage a shifting multiplicity of communities involved with a space. To explore this further, I now turn to two analyses that I introduced in Chapter 4: considering the tempo at which buildings' layouts and furnishing transformed, and then examining more closely the assemblage of ridges, platforms, screen walls and thresholds that built *friction* into these spaces.

5.4.2 Tempos of transformation

As I outlined in Chapter 4 (§4.4.3), examining tempo helps us to think about the way more-than-human communities changed. I showed how we can distinguish times when space was reworked gradually and piece-by-piece, and times when it was reconceptualized in a more far-reaching way. A larger population of house biographies not only puts these observations in perspective; it allows us to think more clearly about the implications of tempo for practice in larger social landscapes. In particular, I want to draw out three salient patterns.

(1) All buildings had at least one, and up to four, major transitions in their use-lives, supporting the bifurcation of tempos observed in Building 131.

(2) These transitions usually had a focal point in the house.

(3) Although the full range of features involved in Çatalhöyük houses could be involved in major transitions, there was a particular tendency for *friction* to be increased as a part of these transitions by adding platforms, ridges and other demarcations.

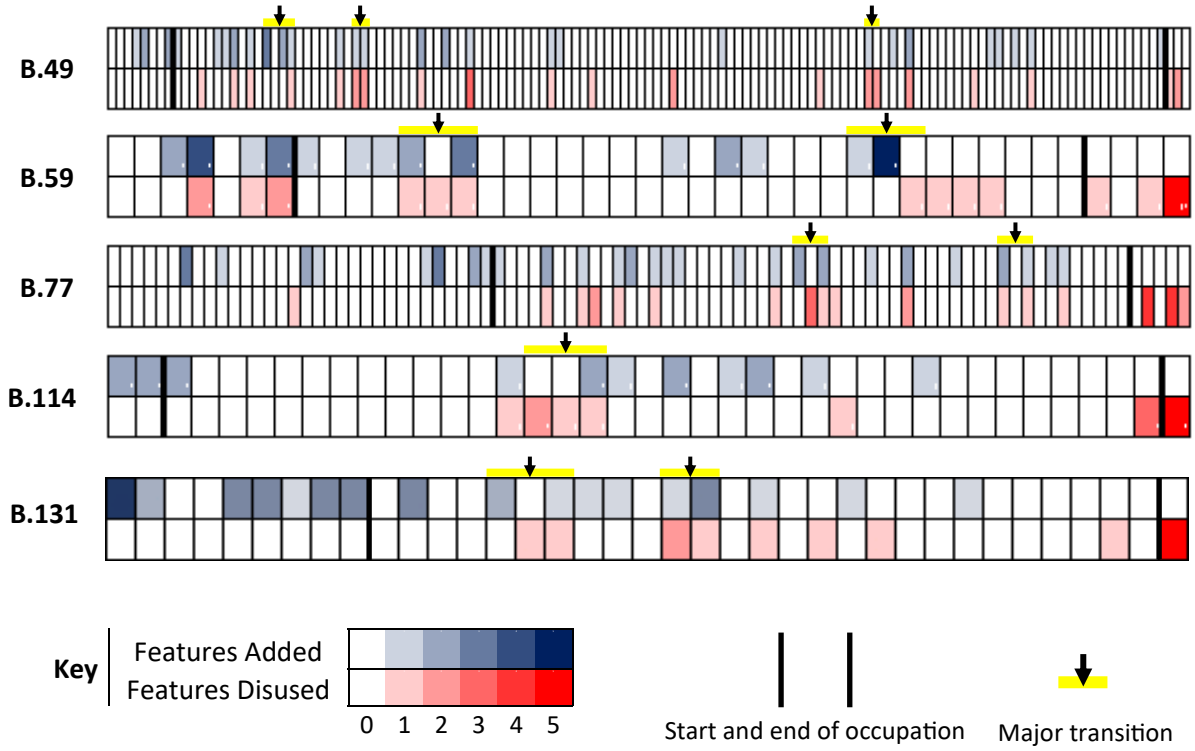


Figure 5.34. Tempos of change in surface features across five buildings' biographies.

Figure 5.34 presents two lines (surface features added and disused at each timestep) for all five buildings. The immediate pattern that emerges is of bifurcated tempos: many of the changes that inflected buildings' biographies occurred piecemeal in small tweaks, but equally every building was occasionally substantially refurnished in a short time span. I have highlighted major transitions as spans of three or fewer timesteps with five or more features added or disused across them, incorporating further adjacent timesteps under discretion. This is a rough definition for several reasons: timesteps are not a good measure of real-time duration; there is no guarantee that this synopsis captures events' contemporaneity; and not all feature changes would have had equally dramatic impacts on a house's social roles. However, this rough heuristic allows me to highlight specific parts of houses' biographies for closer analysis. These are marked with black arrows and yellow lines.

The minor tweaks that run through every building's biography should not be dismissed as inconsequential. They include many of the changes to buildings' capacities and layout that I will analyse below. Indeed, the cumulative impact of small changes on buildings' relational qualities was probably greater, across the life of any given structure, than that of radical restructuring. One of the clear advantages of a fine-grained stratigraphic analysis is in showing this: when we do not lump changes into a few phases, but let the stratigraphy establish the sequence, change in Çatalhöyük houses appears more gradual and continuous, rather than settling into a punctuated equilibrium. This is important social information.

Houses were neither locked into very precise forms, nor were they ever perfectly fit for purpose for long. As communities changed, houses changed steadily with them.

If we allow the average 50-80 year longevity of a Çatalhöyük house to hold true for these buildings (pending clarification from forthcoming radiocarbon dates), a rate of one to four major transformations in that time suggests that rapid overhauls of buildings' roles and capacities were rare events, perhaps occurring once every decade or two. A similar rate is implied by the rough biographies of Buildings 1, 3 and 52. Buildings 1 and 52 were burned and then reduced in size. Building 3's main room was partitioned into two spaces, the oven moved, then the side space seemingly closed. These data suggest that buildings' biographies were not strictly processes of slow, organic change; at times, whatever the range of communities and relationships a building was bound up in, there were breaking points when space 'snapped' into new configurations. Although rare in any single building, if we consider a larger neighbourhood of houses, such breaking points must have been a regular feature of community dynamics, arising perhaps every few years or even more often.

This analysis raises the question whether particular features or capacities of houses were more regularly implicated in major transitions than others. For example, we could imagine a scenario where buildings were most dramatically changed when they crossed some threshold into special status and were equipped with sculptures and other elaborations, in which case most major transitions would involve sculptural features. In part, I will defer this question to the coming sections. However, using the rough definition of major transitions that I set out above, Table 5.8 provides an overview of the kinds of feature changes involved in the most dramatic spans of timesteps in the timelines in question.

The overall picture is of diversity: the major transitions here include the addition, removal and replacement of ovens and hearths, bins and basins, querns set into the surface, sculptures, walls, kerbs, platforms, and more. They do not represent a specific set of circumstances in which houses' social roles were reworked; a variety of circumstances and conjunctions of human needs and spatial capacities could lead to space 'snapping' into a new configuration. On the other hand, major transitions tend to have specific spatial focuses, with one or a few spatial segments receiving most of the attention. Where there appear to be two or more focal areas of transformation on far sides of a building, there is rarely clinching stratigraphic evidence that these transformations occurred at the same time. While it remains possible, for example, that Building 77's kitchen was simplified at the same moment that its burial platforms were decommissioned and heavily ornamented, it would stretch the evidence too far to say that these two things *did* happen contemporaneously (see relative timeline in Appendix A.6).

Time-steps	Features Added	Features Removed	Features Replaced	Comment	Cooking	Processing	Movement/ Access	Display
Building 49								
21-24	Hearth (10003); Kerb (33401/33402); Platform (33402); Basin (33402); Inset Quern (33402)		Hearth (10003)	Substantial remodelling of side space, plus construction and first replacement of main room hearth. These two components are stratigraphically distant but the side space changes are substantial.	+	+	+	
32-33	Oven (10002)	Kerb (10006); Kerb (10003); Inset Quern (33402)	Basin (33402)	Construction of the oven; southwest and northeast kerbs subsumed below rising floors; side space basin raised leaving inset quern in situ. These components are stratigraphically distant.	+	-	-	
95-96	Screen Wall (10003/10004); Wall Moulding (10004)	Bench (10004/33402); Kerb (10003/33401); side space likely closed		Major overhaul/blocking off of interface between two rooms.			+/-	+
Building 59								
12-15	Threshold (31109/27601); 3 x Bins (27601); Platform (31103); Kerb (31301/31601); 2 x Bins (31301)	Threshold (31103/31601)		Reworking of all three doorways, plus addition of bins in the NE and NW side spaces. The Sp.276 sequence is stratigraphically distant from the western side spaces' sequence, but these are clear major transitions in both areas.		+	+/-	
29-31	2 x double-chamber bins (31601); Hearth (31601); Firespot (31601); Oven (31601); 2x Horned(?) Pillars (31107); High Platform (31107)	Hearth/firespot (31102)		Two major transformations: northwestern high platform in main room is raised and ornamented, and the southwest side space is fitted with a full kitchen and four bins. Although the platform stratigraphically precedes the southwest kitchen, these may happen in short succession.	+/-	+	+	+

Table 5.8 *continues on next page*

Time-steps	Features Added	Features Removed	Features Replaced	Comment	Cooking	Processing	Movement/ Access	Display
Building 77								
58-60	"Skinny Bin" Sculpting (33608); 2 x Horned Pillars (33609)	Basin (33603); Oven (33603); Hearth (33602)	Oven (33602)	Two transformations: the northeast platform is ornamented with horned pillars, precipitating the final burials and richest painting; and the southern kitchen is condensed to a single oven. Both are major changes, although stratigraphically distant.	-	-		+
75-77			Basin (33602); Hearth (33602); Oven (33602)	Kitchen features closed and rebuilt in a single integrated construction of a basin/bin, hearth, and oven. Stratigraphy is tight but this is more of a "major tweak" than a radical overhaul.				
Building 114								
16-18	Retaining Wall (8701/8703); Niche (8701);	Oven (8701); Niche (8701); Crawlhole (8702); Threshold (8702/8703); entire southern side space.	Hearth (8701)	Two transformations with little stratigraphic link: the closure of the southern side-space and conversion of the access to a niche; and the construction of the northern retaining wall blocking the oven. Both are major transitions. These timesteps span the entire time the closed oven was used as a niche prior to the retaining wall's addition, so some changes were in fact spread across some time.	-	-	+/-	
Building 131								
30-32	Bench (50005/50006); Kerb (55601/50007); Basin (50004)	Hearth (50002); Oven (50401)		A range of tweaks in three kitchen areas, plus two new ridges/benches to direct movement--but with little stratigraphic connection between areas. May be a product of the relative timeline method rather than actual sweeping change across the space.			+	
36-37	Bin (50004); Firespot (50004); Hearth Pedestal (50002)		Oven (50004); Ladder (50001)	Two substantial tweaks of two kitchen areas and the entry, but with little stratigraphy to ensure that they occurred contemporaneously.	+	+	~	

Table 5.8. *(Continuing from previous page).* Features added, removed and replaced as part of major transitions.

The other notable trend in Table 5.8 is that as buildings' involvement in communities changed, the way people moved through them was also altered. This is most visible in the frequency with which kerbs, benches, platforms and walls were added in transitions that involved a range of other features. Kerbs, benches, and changes of elevation did not obstruct movement, but they did texture it, suggesting rather than imposing barriers. I discussed this in Chapter 4 under the moniker of *friction* (§4.6.2). As I discussed there, friction was crucial to allowing diverse people undertaking a range of activities to access and coordinate spaces like these. Complex sharing arrangements would perhaps have been undermined by cordoning off many single-purpose, rigidly-bounded or proprietary rooms. But equally, people depend on the material contours of space to coordinate their interactions with one another, particularly when there are no clear hierarchies of authority or ownership of a room or building (Kent 1990). Rooms with friction provided rich material resources for working through the multiplicity of houses' social engagements on the fly, without imposing strict boundaries. It is unsurprising, then, that in moments when the multiple roles of a house were most holistically considered and rearranged—in moments of major transition—the ridges, platforms and walls that textured buildings' interiors received special attention.

5.4.3 Navigating multiplicity: topology and standardization in flexible space

The social roles that 66th century buildings played were not neatly integrated, nor did they always stay the same from year to year. Much as I illustrated with Building 131's walls in Chapter 4, these houses were part of a variety of partially-overlapping stakeholder communities at any given time, and needed to accommodate flexible usage. Over time, this led to both a steady series of tweaks in every house's biography, and moments when every house was more radically reworked. The impression we are left with is not of cookie-cutter houses, tightly fitted with a single set of human lives (which in turn were tightly fitted to the space). Rather, the multiple tempos of transformation that pulsed through houses' biographies and the wide variety of changes these comprised indicates steady improvisation.

What is somewhat surprising is the consistent directionality that can emerge out of improvisation. Spaces not only tended toward conformity with some 'standard' principles of organization; they became steadily richer in demarcations and divisions. That is to say, houses' layouts were given more *friction* over time. Figure 5.35 shows the number of spatial segments—areas defined on four sides by walls, kerbs, or changes in floor elevation (platform edges, benches)—over each building's biography, along with the assemblage of features that effected these demarcations. Most basic subdivisions of space are added early in structures' biographies, but further divisions are added later on. In Figure 5.35, kerbs and

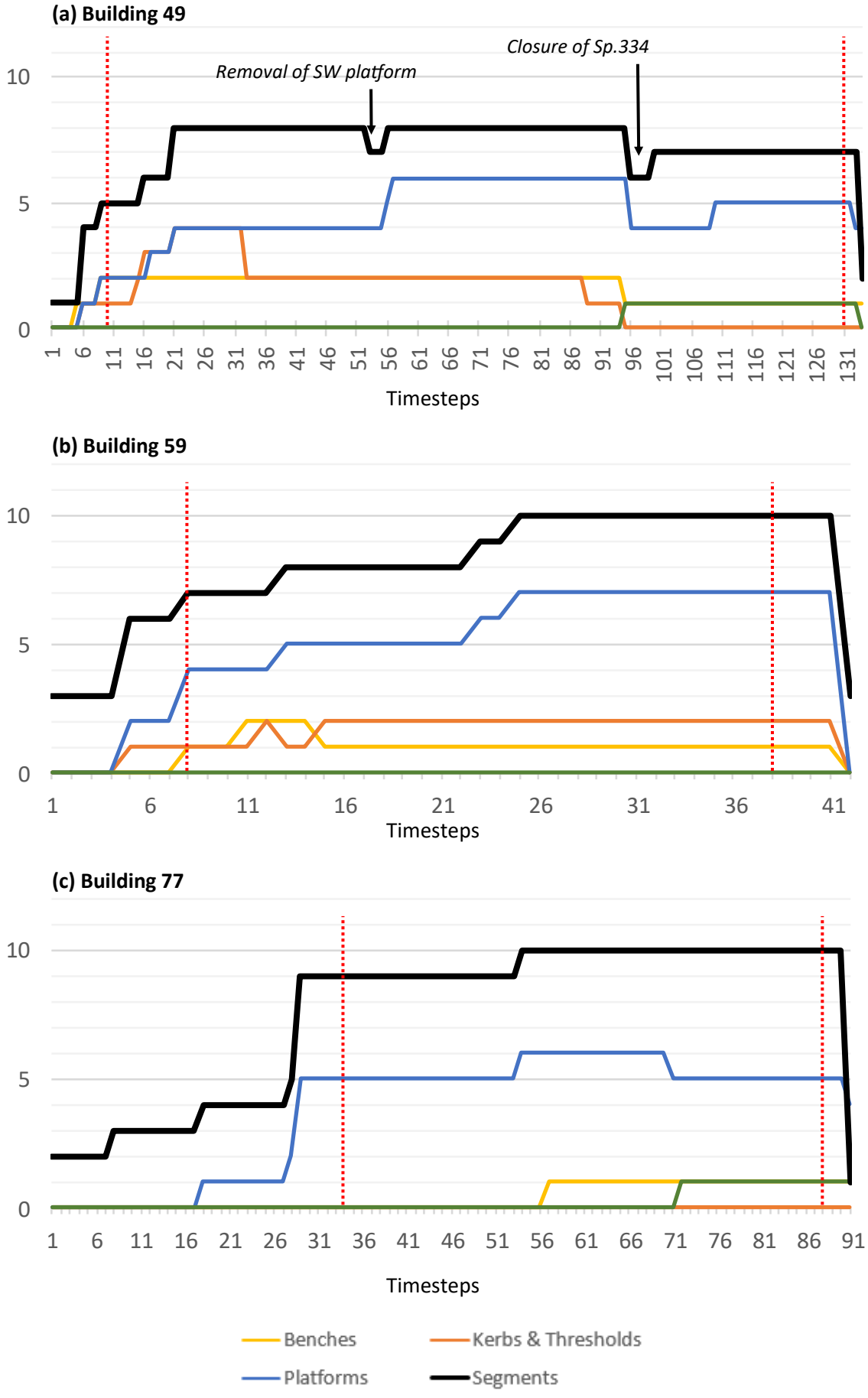


Figure 5.35 *continues on the next page.*

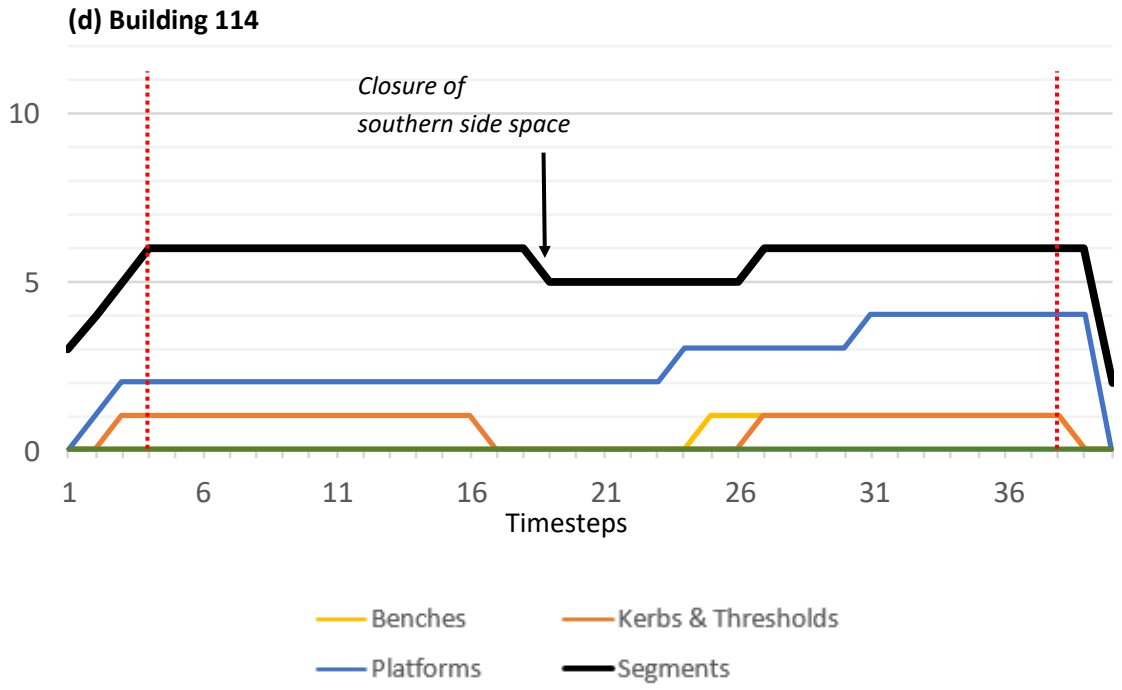


Figure 5.35. *(Continuing from previous page).* Changing delineation and segmentation of space in five houses. Red verticals indicate start and end of occupation.

benches appear to be shorter-lived than platforms and screen walls; this is not because divisions created by smaller ridges were shorter-lived, but because small demarcations were often converted to more substantial features (platforms or screen walls) over time.

It might seem counterintuitive that houses trend almost exclusively toward greater segmentation, given the material nature of those divisions. As floors rose through successive plastering and levelling deposits, it would have been easy to erase kerbs and rearrange space along other lines. Screen walls, while substantial, were not generally load-bearing structures and could have been removed without great effort. Even platforms were not physically immovable, as the exceptional removal of a low, gradually-formed platform in the southwest corner of Building 49 shows. Yet even here, the scoured-out platform was soon replaced by a formally-built, brick-rimmed platform in the same location. The only other times in these biographies where structures' overall segment count decreases are instances where side spaces were closed before the end of occupation; if the graphs included only main spaces, the count of floor segments would exclusively rise.

When diverse changes in substance lead to a directional change in form, we know that we are learning about social tools that people have to improvise with. To take an example you may find familiar: consider how university initiatives, originating from diverse corners of the

administration and aimed at any number of noble or ignoble ends, almost unfailingly create a new committee, a new form for faculty to file, or both. Whatever the details, a side effect is an expanding bureaucratic apparatus, culminating now and then in committees convened to address excessive paperwork loads, and obligatory form-filling to track staff members' committee work. None of this diminishes the importance of the initiatives in question; some are absolutely urgent. But it points us to the set of social tools we have to create and manage change in our own communities (Graeber 2015).

It has been argued that the convergence of space-making activity on a set of standard forms in mid-7th millennium Çatalhöyük reflects a conservative habitus and social 'modularity', with a repetitive arrangement of space and practice shaping successive generations of people into households that were effectively similar from one to the next (e.g. Hodder and Cessford 2004). The more dynamic impression of houses' roles developed in this thesis invites us to revisit this argument. Houses changed—the roles they were cast in and the people who made use of them likely turned over every few years as relationships changed. 66th century houses were *not* finely tuned to the needs of modular households with a clear set of practices for which each was responsible (cf. Figures 3.2 and 3.4). They had limited *integrity* in this sense. But there was a clear sensibility of how to arrange spaces that went beyond specific functionality or social context. A stranger descending into any of these buildings could easily get her bearings, aided by the common organizational guidelines that most houses followed. When the range of practices ongoing in a house shifted, especially when it shifted dramatically, people drew new boundaries, which though easily passable suggested differentiation between areas, tasks, and perhaps people. People could then have used or ignored these guidelines situationally as needed. In much the way a language's grammar is essential for the production of new sentences and ideas, a common habitus and 'modular' space allowed houses to be fitted *less* integrally to human groups, suiting multilateral communities and steadily changing human-house relationships.

To extend this argument further, the next section examines the way vital daily practices shifted into and out of houses over their use-lives, and the interdependency that this implies between spaces and communities. The extent to which 66th century buildings lacked an integral set of social roles will become clearer. What this initial examination of buildings' layouts and tempos of transformation shows is the extent to which people worked through the materiality of space to manage life in steadily-transforming and intertwined communities. The potential of even modest clay ridges, benches, and platforms to introduce friction and help fit diverse practices and people into a space was an understated but vital political resource for living in this context. Far from revealing centuries-deep commitment to social sameness or a cookie-cutter approach to social life, the eerily similar interiors of Çatalhöyük

houses, with their rich assemblage of ridges and rises, may clue us into the material-cultural tools people had for working through social *change*.

5.5 Living together: creative dependency

Tracing houses' biographies substantially changes our impression of activities that are usually cast as ubiquitous, household affairs. As I discussed in Chapter 2, summarizing studies of Çatalhöyük usually conclude that every house was equipped with facilities to store, process, and prepare food for the daily needs of its core residents. Although larger gatherings for meals and feasts are cast as important social events, they are ultimately understood as secondary, optional elaborations on daily foodways (e.g. Demirergi et al. 2014; Twiss 2012). This does not mean that people did not collaborate more broadly in tasks like planting and harvesting crops (Bogaard 2017), or that some mainstay activities like acquiring obsidian, manufacturing groundstone tools or making beads and jewellery were not centred on specialist individuals or households (e.g. Bains et al. 2013; Wright 2014). But the overall picture is that the most obligatory metabolic tasks in the 66th century—managing the food supply, cooking, heating houses in poor weather—were managed on a house-by-house (that is, household-by-household) basis.

By contrast, in the biographies above, features and spaces related to daily metabolic tasks change almost constantly in any given house. There is a great deal of difference, not just from one house to the next, but from one part of a house's life to the next. These changes are especially revealing about the site's political dynamics. Not only did tasks like cooking rely on features that are highly archaeologically visible; they also trace the most fundamental spatial entanglements of human life. We can assume that every inhabitant of the North Area in the 66th century needed to maintain access, direct or indirect, to some sort of food store and some sort of fire installation almost every day of his or her life. These features would have been vital centres for human relationships and more-than-human communities in the past, and studying their dynamics through time helps us to understand houses' changing social roles.

5.5.1 Metabolic action I: storing and processing food

One politics of food is captured by the shifting assemblages of bins, basins, and querns in houses. Procuring, storing and processing food involved a diversity of collaborations, some of them likely expansive and cross-cutting other social groupings. Planting, harvesting, and

managing herds are scenes of cooperation across family or household lines in many societies, and analyses of Çatalhöyük agricultural practice suggest that similarly collective efforts were likely mustered in fields scattered around the local wetlands (Bogaard 2017; Fairbairn et al. 2005; Pearson 2013). One corollary of this is that broad communities could potentially claim a stake in the agricultural produce that came to be stored in a given house. Meanwhile, processing grain and other foodstuffs required both intensive labour and specific equipment, drawing practice into specific locations. All of this suggests an ongoing tension around stored and processed food: who collaborated to produce it, and to what extent, and who could draw on it to meet their needs (Bogaard et al. 2009)?

The caveats set out for this analysis in Chapter 4 (§4.4.1) remain as we scale up. Many activities considered, like storing food and grinding grain, could have been done with portable equipment; it is likely that in good weather, cooking took place on rooftops, as can be demonstrated for Building 3 (Matthews 2012). However, the fact that people did sometimes build durable bins, affix querns to floors and heavily use indoor ovens, effectively 'hard-coding' storage and processing locations into houses, represents a particular commitment to working with specific locations in specific ways. Particular outside of summertime, the features we see in houses were likely people's primary sources of food and central focuses of their daily activities.

With these caveats noted, there are robust patterns in houses' biographical involvement in food storage and processing. Figure 5.36 compiles each building's assemblage of inset querns, bins and basins over time. Even more so than with the kitchen assemblages, clear qualitative differences between buildings are immediately apparent. Most buildings' overall capacities (in terms of binary presence or absence) seem to change infrequently. Buildings with bins tended to have bins for most of their use-lives, buildings with inset querns tended to have querns for most of their use-lives, and so on. Building 49 is an exception: it contained a variety of basins over its use-life, two of them with inset querns, but all appear to have been fairly short-lived features, while the large bin complex in its southwest corner only appeared towards the end of occupation. There is clear variation in the set of tasks buildings were equipped for, ranging from exclusively bins in Building 59 to all three feature types in Building 77.

The most prominent difference between structures, however, is in terms of quantity. Building 77 contained up to five bins and four basins at points in its use-life, and Building 59 contained 10 bins at the time that its first full kitchen was installed (around TS 31). These represent substantial, long-term implications of these structures in storage and processing. By contrast, Building 114 contained one small bin and a quern in its eastern side space (any

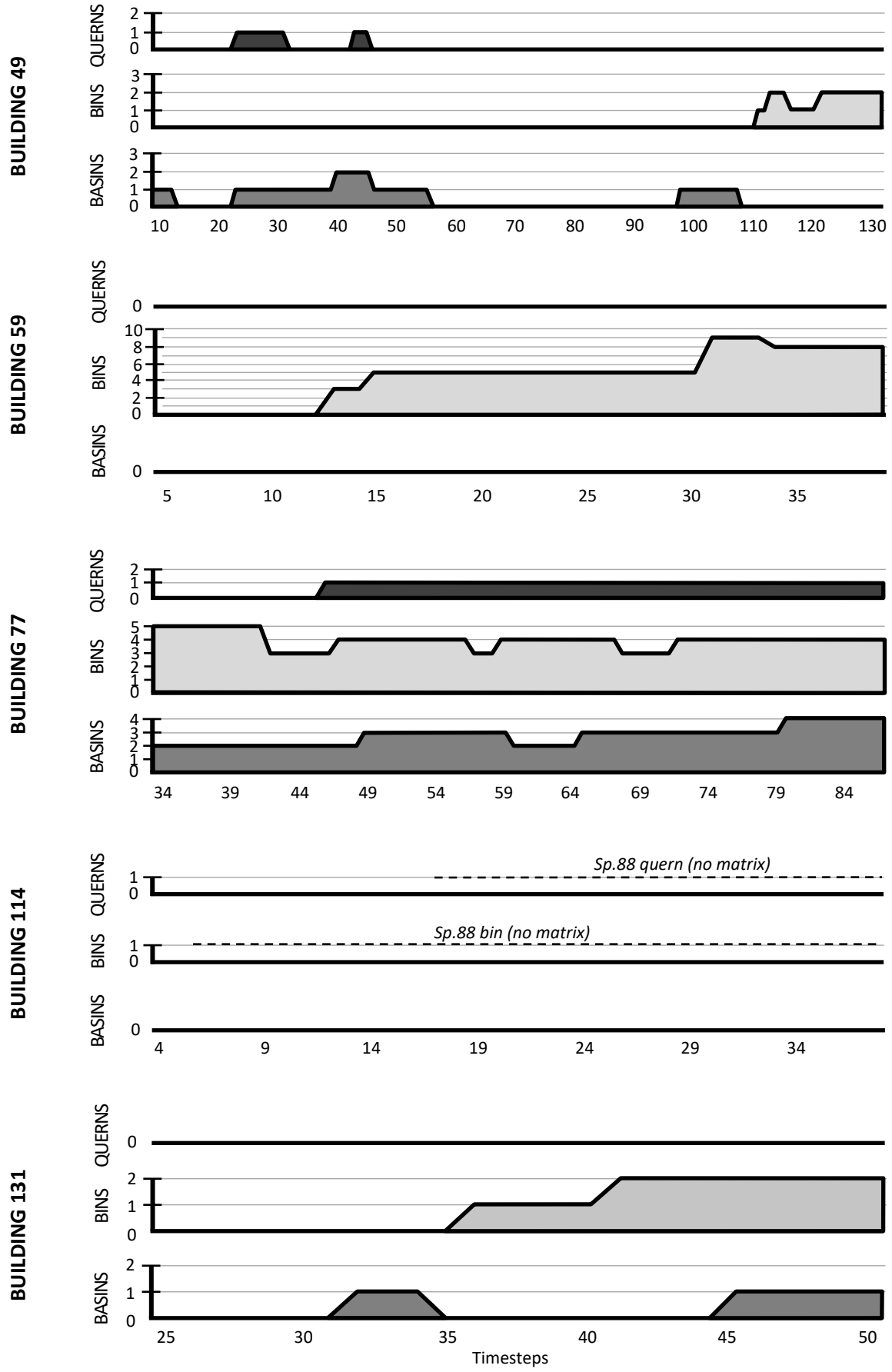


Figure 5.36. Changing configurations of storage and food processing installations across buildings' use-lives. Note that y-axis interval varies between buildings.

features in the southern side space were obliterated when Building 113 was built), while Building 49 also contained at most two basins simultaneously early in its life, and the single (albeit large) bin complex late in its life: their implication in these practices was more limited and possibly intermittent. This is mirrored in terms of side room area, the other widely-used proxy for storage capacity. Buildings 59 and 77 had large side spaces full of bins; Building 131 had a large side space but cluttered with posts and containing a single large bin; and Buildings 49 and 114 had small side spaces that were closed mid-sequence. Certain houses were thus long-term centres for storage and/or processing of food in quantity, while others were sites of smaller-scale and intermittent engagement in these activities.

5.5.2 Metabolic action II: cooking and sharing food

In the houses here, domed clay ovens remain in use alongside open hearths. I take it that ovens and hearths were involved in different aspects of the overall site cuisine (Fuchs-Khakhar 2019; González Carretero 2020). Ovens remained central features, but were more specialized cooking installations than in previous centuries, perhaps more clearly associated with bread production. Hearths by contrast could have been used for boiling, roasting, and lighting. Despite not knowing exactly how these different capacities were activated in practice, we can imagine that different combinations and absences of features made for spaces with different contributions to the foodways of the North Area population. A kitchen with an oven and a hearth could contribute to people's diets in different ways than a kitchen with just a hearth, or just an oven; a building without either was not a space where people cooked at all, and if meals were ever eaten there the food was 'take-away' from somewhere else. A second assumption in the analysis here is that every inhabitant of the North Area ate every basic variety of food on offer, at least sometimes: if a person primarily inhabited a structure without an oven, this does not mean that she never ate bread, but that the bread she ate came from elsewhere.

Figure 5.37 shows the changing assemblage of fire installations in each of the four houses investigated in detail above, in terms of simple counts. (For simplicity, I have grouped unstructured firespots with clay-rimmed hearths in these data). Although most houses are equipped for cooking for most of their use-lives, their precise capacities change regularly. In particular, hearth-only cooking arrangements seem common, and some buildings alternate between oven-and-hearth and hearth-only kitchens. Only Building 59 has an oven-only setup. At least two structures have periods when they were occupied with no fire installations: Building 49 (perhaps briefly) and Building 59 (perhaps for an extended period of time). Building 77 has two ovens apparently in simultaneous use for part of its sequence, and

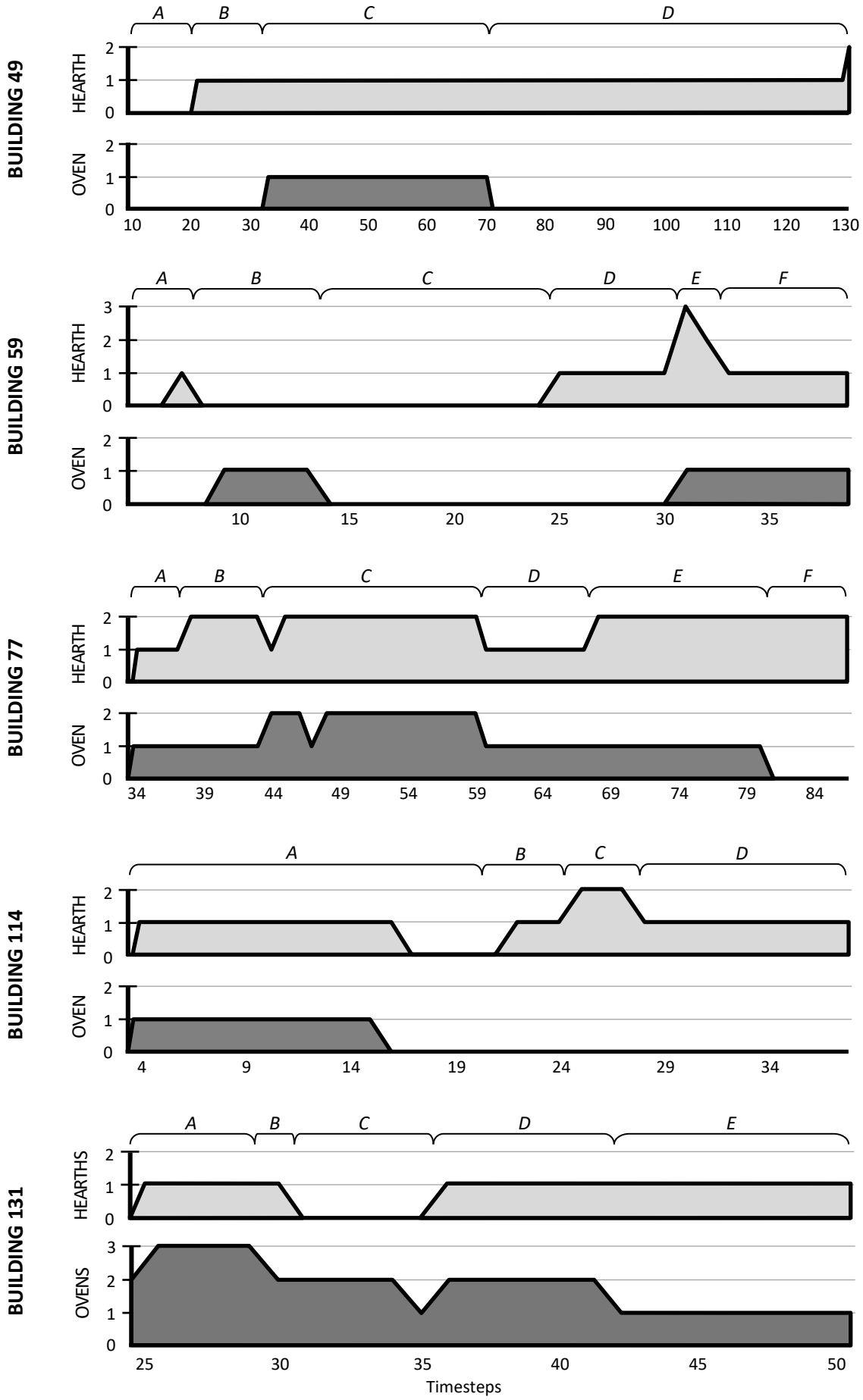


Figure 5.37. Changing configurations of fire installations across buildings' use-lives.

(counting the scorched basin in the side space as an occasional hearth) two hearths in two different rooms. Building 131 also appears to have had fire installations in multiple rooms simultaneously, and Building 52 might, as well.

The top line in Figure 5.37 groups kitchens into 'configurations', noting every time the overall count of hearths or ovens changes[4]. This gives a rough sense of the variety of kitchen forms each building contained over its life. It omits important details, notably the exact spatial arrangements and the presence of other potentially-salient features like bins or pits. Even in this coarse view, however, structures pass through as many as 6 different kitchen configurations over their use-lives. If we take the high-end estimate for buildings' life-spans (about 80 years: Cessford 2005a), this means that most buildings' roles in commensal communities must have shifted every 20 years or so, and probably much more frequently.

Removing the element of sequence, we can also use the device of 'configurations' to get a better sense of the distribution of cooking practice around the broader neighbourhood (Figure 5.38). Far from representing an omnipresent core of domestic practice, this exercise reveals multiple common forms of cooking arrangement in Çatalhöyük houses. In particular, it becomes clear that open hearths and unstructured firespots were the primary cooking installations by the 66th century, with ovens as a more specialized feature: buildings usually contained one or more hearths, with or without an oven, but rarely contained an oven without a hearth.

5.5.3 Daily life and creative interdependency between spaces

The data here allow us to more clearly imagine what the flow of foodstuffs from field to hearth may have looked like at a given moment in the 66th century. We should imagine an uneven geography where certain buildings drew a disproportionate amount of produce into their storage areas, but were not major sites for processing or cooking (Building 59); some were sites for storing food, processing it in quantity, and cooking it (Buildings 77, 131); and other perhaps had modest portable querns and a small in-house food reserve, but also relied on produce or prepared food from other houses (Buildings 49, 114). Some buildings appear to have been long-term focal points for these practices, while others were more flexibly adapted over time, gaining and losing capacities more rapidly.

For considerable parts of each building's occupation, its primary inhabitants depended on

[4] I have smoothed the data somewhat in consultation with the Harris matrices, e.g. where the renovation of Building 114 produces a few timestep gap between sequential hearths.

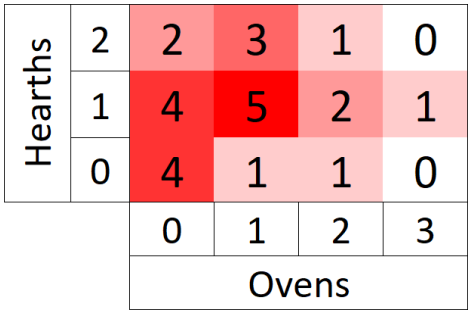


Figure 5.38. Count of North Area kitchen configurations showing most common oven and hearth combinations.

other structures for some or most of their metabolic needs. The politics of food at Çatalhöyük created multiple kinds of collaboration and reliance, perhaps including daily meals cooked over a single hearth and eaten with bread baked elsewhere, or meals cooked in one house but shared among people who slept in, worked in, or plastered several buildings. Participants in meals would have had various attachments to the space in question, and roles in the meal itself: cooks and diners, 'residents', 'regular participants' and 'guests', people who cleaned after the meal and people who left the cleanup for others (cf. Hastorf 2012). These were salient differences, and the exact balance of relations enacted through a given meal depended on the capacities of the spaces involved. By transforming spaces' cooking capacities, people refigured relations and obligations in intimate but consequential ways.

It is true that core domestic practices considered here occur in almost every house, and in that sense they are ubiquitous. Every house had a hearth in it at some point, and an oven and a bin. The same is true of intermittent performances like burial and the deposition of artefact clusters (see next section). However, on any given day in the 66th century, most buildings served in only some of the capacities I have explored. In circumstances as diverse as baking bread or burying the dead, people worked with some, but not all, standing structures in the North Area *at any given time*, even if over a span of decades every house accumulated some remains from each activity. When we consider further potentially collaborative activities off-site, like sowing and harvesting crops, managing herds and stockpiling fuel, the rather straightforward image of daily life suggested by the one-house, one-household, one-food-economy model fragments and becomes richer. Keeping oneself fed and warm was not possible if one *only* had a claim to a single house and a family-sized group of human collaborators.

It becomes clear from the way that they modified space that 66th century people did not form autonomous intimate communities attached to single houses. Quite the opposite. If the goal

of intimate groups was to establish themselves as economically and ritually distinct from their neighbours, it is difficult to understand why people would wall-off and infill a storage room, demolish the one fire installation in the house and make do without a kitchen for years, or go to great lengths to gather rare materials and human bodies in order to construct a house. Nor is it clear why some such communities would need storage space well above and beyond their neighbours, or what benefit there would be to ceasing burial in a previously-central space. In fact, it strains credulity to think of autonomy as a prominent social value in a site where even emptying a chamberpot involved walking through a number of rooftop living spaces. The radically dense architecture of Çatalhöyük, along with the range of roles any house was unequipped to play at any given moment, suggests that interdependency was more a value than a liability as 66th century people worked with matter to shape their world.

This may seem counterintuitive to our eyes. Although our own houses are not neatly cut off from the political world, we do *value* autonomy in the 21st century and may view reliance through the lens of lost freedoms: houses without kitchens or storerooms can look lacking, confined and perhaps peripheral. This writes 21st century values into the 66th century. If the ideal was that houses were meant to be fully-equipped, reducing a house's capacities for essential practices makes little sense. Instead of autonomy, in the biographies above a different value appears at work: what I term *creative dependency* (§4.5.4). At many points in the 66th century, houses that played a vital role in storing grain, baking bread, or burying the dead ceased to do so. Yet other kinds of space-making in them went on. I do not imagine that all of the people invested in these buildings stopped drawing on stored-up food, stopped baking or dying. Rather, by infilling a storage room or decommissioning a burial platform people committed to collaborating in other ways and other spaces in the future. Although the specific on-the-ground circumstances behind changes likely varied, what they have in common is their reliance on *other possible articulations of space and community* that existed at any moment in their lives. By unequipping spaces for some of life's most necessary tasks, people in the 66th century depended on (and thereby asserted) the ability to live through multiple spaces, in multiple communities and with diverse collaborators. Studiously *avoiding* autonomy was a way to ensure that people at Çatalhöyük had a clear stake in many spaces, many others' lives, and many essential materials.

5.6 Defining space: a tension between surfaces and depths

Thus far, I have focused primarily on the way shaping space's surface with boundaries and features helped shape the flow of human bodies and portable (particularly edible) material. In terms of the registers of action that I defined in Chapter 3 (§3.3.2), I have mainly

considered features' *insistence*. We have seen how insistent features situated practice in place and provided resources to think and work through complex, multilateral relationships. This casts Çatalhöyük houses in an active role, working within and giving shape to diverse 66th century communities. But as a house's assemblage of insistent features shifted with time, it did not become a different structure altogether. Through other registers of material action, Çatalhöyük houses took on qualities with considerable temporal and physical depth. Walls were built on decades-old walls, burials were cut into previous burials, wall plasters grew thick and floors overtopped low features. Histories quite literally accumulated in association with each specific structure, cutting across the vicissitudes of changing stakeholders and furnishing.

In Chapter 4, I argued that there was a tension between politics that activated spaces' *surfaces* within communities, and politics that activated their *depths* (§4.5.3). As I detailed there, shaping and maintaining surfaces —rebuilding houses, replastering floors and walls, raising an area as a platform—also paradoxically put a time limit on features' insistence. A low ridge may have helped negotiate the way people moved around in a complex, shared room, but unless it was recreated time and again throughout a building's life, it would have disappeared below rising floor plasters within a few years. Likewise, all visible trace of graves, paintings, artefact deposits, disused hearths, dismantled ovens and more would have been lost quickly into the subsurface. On the other hand, taking part in practices like rebuilding, replastering, and burial would have fostered the indelible knowledge that there was a world of meaningful, spatialized matter below one's feet at all times. Sometimes this world 'down there' was revealed by digging holes, for example to reopen old graves or retrieve sculptures from walls; other times, it was *translated* into memories, stories, and claims without re-engaging with it physically (cf. Nakamura 2010)). And often space-making relied materially on the buried remains of past action, like masonry that used old walls for foundations or burials that used previous interments as part of a new funerary performance. In these ways and more, *embedded* material culture continued to shape houses' biographies.

Houses' embedded histories may have been important both because buried matter was bound up in ongoing projects, and because contributing to house's subsurface helped to build and structure the social consensus among stakeholders that kept a building living. The past was activated, not out of conservative devotion to sameness but as a way to negotiate future difference. We may never know exactly what stake the birth mothers of dead infants gained in buildings with babies in the foundations, or how gathering turtle shells, axes and bones to deposit in a side room informed the lives of the people who made use of the room later. But by following the different ways these features acted socially, and examining them

in the context of houses' broader biographies, we can begin to understand the contribution that performances and gatherings, burials and embedding acts made to the political lives of 66th century houses.

This section presents a brief contextual and biographical analysis of the burials, embedded artefacts, paintings and sculptural displays in the houses at the centre of this chapter. First, I will extend the discussion first begun in Chapter 4 (§4.4.2) to consider the relationship between dramatic performances like funerals and feasts, subsurface deposits like bodies and artefact clusters, and visual elaborations like paintings, sculptures, and burial cuts as these all built historical qualities into houses. Then I give an overview of the temporal patterning of these activities in the biographies above. I build the argument that the way history was activated shifted regularly over the course of buildings' lives, from histories constructed by embedding matter to histories constructed by displaying it. Houses thus took on a 'social age' that gave them different political qualities. Finally, I consider this evidence in light of the broader politics of houses as multiples, implicated in intersecting communities, projects and lives.

5.6.1 Building histories in the 66th century: performance, burial, and display

The numerous deposits of bodies and artefacts in Building 131's foundations, discussed at some length in Chapter 4 (§4.6), are one example of a broad genre of space-making activity at Çatalhöyük (e.g. Carter et al. 2015; Russell et al. 2014; Tsoraki 2018; Twiss 2012). Gatherings aggregated a number of objects and/or human bodies, requiring the direct or indirect consensus of a diversity of participants. Many such gatherings involved dramatic performances, like funerals or feasts, and may have spilled across a broader landscape (for example, hunting large game for a feast or carrying bodies across the roofscape). But they culminated with objects, bodies and/or bones being deposited into surfaces, usually as a part of a broader moment of spatial renegotiation like construction or demolition, the erection of a platforms or the creation of a cluster of storage bins. These events could be fairly intimate or truly massive: Demirergi et al. (2014) estimate that some clusters of feasting remains could have fed more than 1,000 people, a significant portion of the site population. Participants in such events could range from ritual practitioners, hunters and cooks to kin of the deceased, neighbours or uninvited freeloaders. The various attachments, relationships and authority people may have developed with the spaces in question would have been as diverse as their contributions, but these memorable and transformative events could have significantly altered the articulation of spaces and lives in the town.

Although some intense gatherings surely occurred without associated spatial transformations, many did. This is especially clear for artefact deposits (Nakamura 2010; Nakamura and Pels 2014), but also of burials in foundations (Buildings 49, 59, 77, 131), in the core of platforms (Building 49), between newly-built horned pillars (Building 77) and the like. Indeed, deposits such as the articulated fingers in Building 114's retaining wall, the human metatarsal recovered from a screen wall in Building 3, or the infant cranium mirroring a stone sphere on the shoulders of an adult burial in Building 114 suggest interesting grey space between the categories of 'artefact deposit', 'grave good' and 'human interment' (Kay in prep.; cf. Eriksen 2017).

There is little sense of a rigid typology of deposits or burials. Instead, as Nakamura (2010, 325-6) argues, moments 'in-between' social and spatial orders had a particular potential power that could be activated by aggregating and accumulating bodies and objects. Making memorable moments—and materializing them through deposition—reshaped communities' futures. And by the same coin, communities' presents were structured by the ongoing effects of past events that infused the ground below their feet with meaningful (and sometimes structurally vital) matter.

After a gathering and embedding event, the location of embedded matter would have been visible at the surface for a time. Pits or graves dug through white plaster floors would leave visible scars and stains until the floors were resurfaced. But other performances were marked more dramatically. As we saw in Buildings 49 and 131, many wall paintings were likely produced in conjunction with burial events in adjacent platforms. These could have endured for several months, before being plastered over. Incised paintings, as on the walls of Buildings 77 and 114, could last even longer, remaining visible even if a thin plaster layer was applied to them. Artefacts needed not be embedded invisibly in surfaces; the obsidian-cored 'breast' on the wall of Building 77 effectively marked the location of the artefacts it contained for the remainder of the building's life. And in some cases, most especially relating to feasts, objects deriving from intensive gatherings were embedded visibly within sculptural installations like horned pillars (Buildings 77 and possibly 59), posts (Building 52), wall sculptures (Building 77) and benches (Buildings 1, 52), standing out prominently in the room.

As Nakamura (2010) has discussed, despite the common chain of operations (gather people and materials; retain some materials from that gathering; embed them in a place that is changing), these different ways of embedding materials in space invoke different constructions of knowledge and invite different kinds of politics. There was a difference between burying people in individual cuts, studiously avoiding intercutting of graves, and

burying people sequentially in the same spot for years, revealing and rearranging them in the course of new funerals. In both cases, people who knew where the bodies were buried in a house had considerable importance going forward—but in the case of intercut graves, bodies were revisited, memories modified and reinforced, perhaps to a partially new audience, while whoever directed the location of the grave tangibly demonstrated their knowledge (cf. Nakamura & Pels 2014, 197). There is a further difference between embedding bodies or feasting remains in the subsurface and displaying them, letting them shape movement, practice and experiences in the space. Horned pillars, artefact-cored 'breasts', and incised paintings worked much more through the politics of surfaces than that of depths: the history of a place was not buried below the ground, but visible to any visitor in a space. The salient details about a house's past were made more immediate, depending less on the ability to remember, reveal or avoid things 'down there', and more on the striking demonstration of social consensus 'up here'.

The manner in which performances were materialized in space had a great impact on their implications for communities moving forward. Who could know about the past of a place? If animal horns from a feast were buried in pits, only people who remembered the feast and the deposition, or heard about it second-hand, could connect the two. If they were mounted on a pillar, the performance of consensus that occurred in a day or two would remain visible to any who entered the house for years. How tied to a specific location were the remains of a performance? One could conceivably erect a horned pillar in a house that had little to do with feasting; one could not retrieve skulls from a house that contained no burials. As we will see here (and explore further in a long-term perspective in Chapter 6), there is reason to believe that these simple but salient differences produced different opportunities for materializing social consensus, creating different vectors of material politics.

5.6.2 Biographies of burial, embedding, painting and display

Having laid out, in broad terms, the way intensive performances and embedding acts built up qualities like consensus, memory, and visible and invisible histories in a place, let us briefly explore the biographical qualities of burial, artefact embedding, painting and display in the houses above. Figure 5.39 pulls specific feature types out of the biographies above, showing burial, painting, and sculptural elaboration across all five buildings' use-lives. Figure 5.40 does the same for practices that dug into or embedded material within floors: pits and surface embedding. I will briefly discuss the patterns in each kinds of practice in turn, while the next section synthesizes these data to build a fuller picture of buildings' histories.

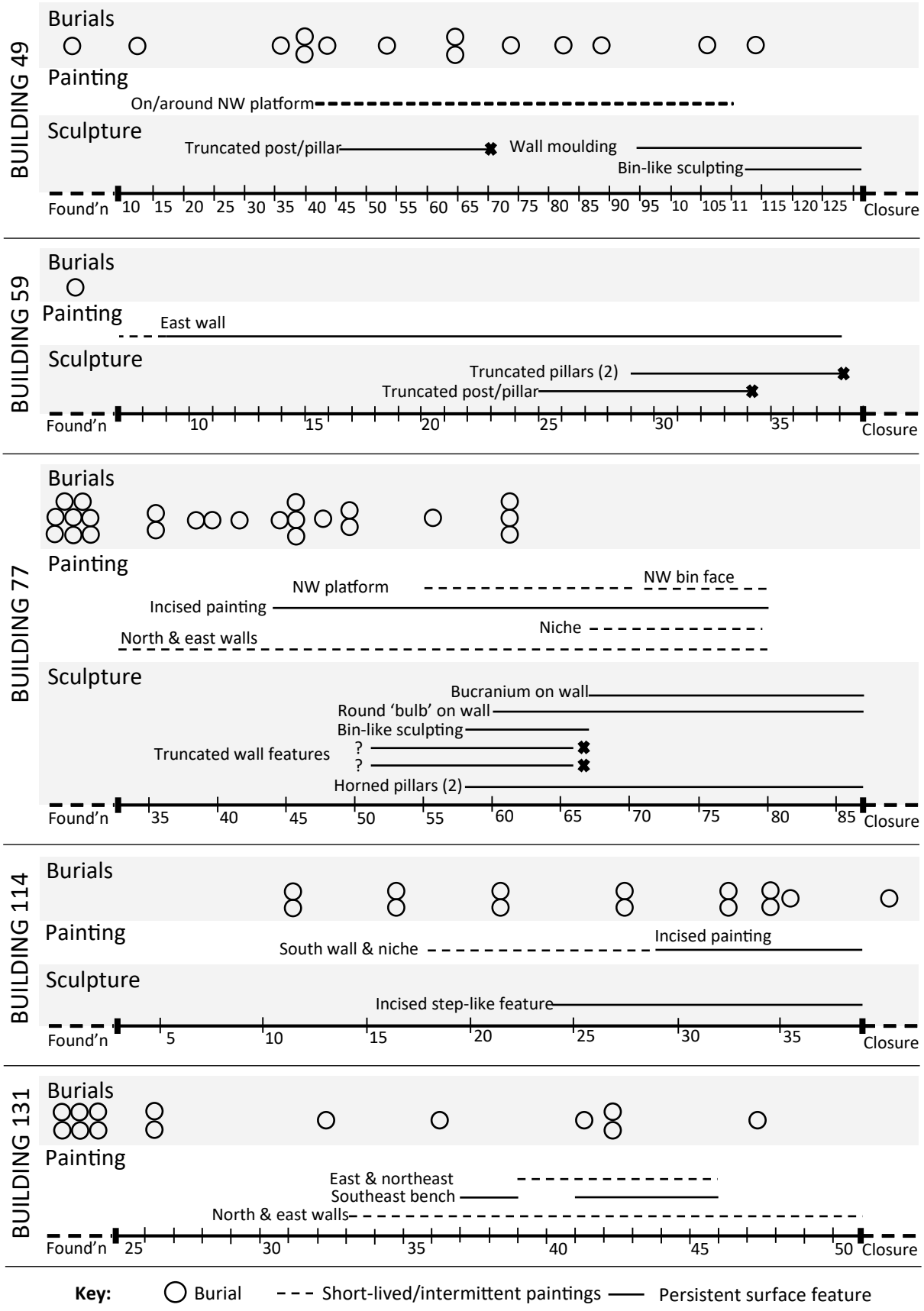


Figure 5.39. Burials, painting, and sculpture in five buildings' biographies.

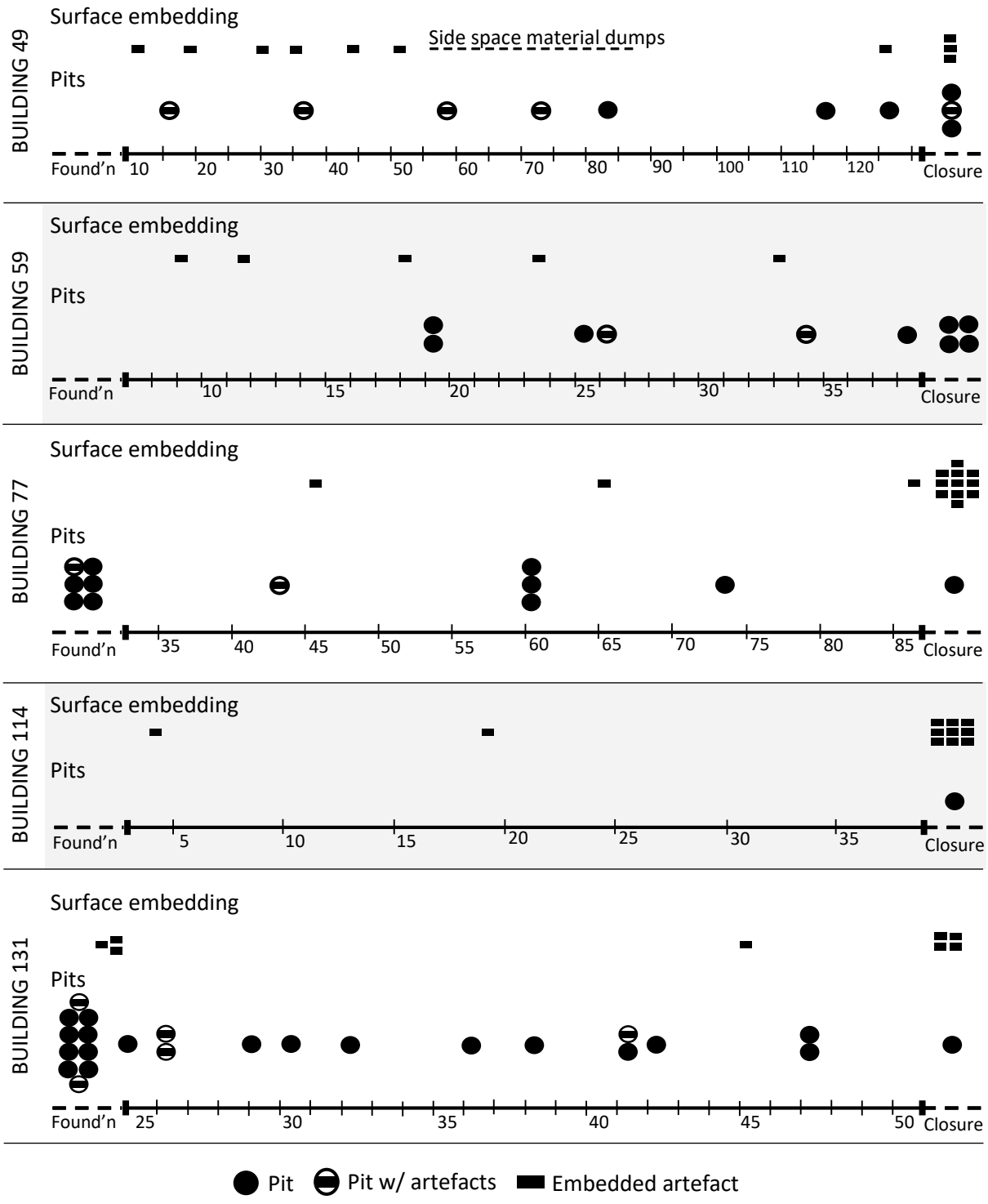


Figure 5.40. Pit-digging and artefact-embedding through 66th century houses' biographies.

Embedding artefacts

Objects or clusters of objects appear in pits or sealed within foundation, flooring, feature construction or demolition layers. Deposited artefacts vary radically, from single finds or scatters of debitage from knapping events, to modest pits full of stones, to lavish clusters of querns, animal parts, assorted tools and human body elements. In this thesis I take an inclusive view of depositional practice. Previous studies that have focused on deposition of specific kinds of artefacts (e.g. Russell,Martin and Twiss 2009; Tsoraki 2018) or on collections of artefacts defined as 'clusters' in the site database (Nakamura 2010; Nakamura & Pels 2014). In contrast, during my review of the unit-level documentation, I noted each instance where excavators mention a conspicuously embedded artefact or substance (e.g. burnt brick; scoured wall paintings; owl pellets). I begin with the assumption that all of these artefacts were deposited through intentional human action: digging and infilling, layering-on and sweeping-out. The question is how incidental the artefacts themselves were in the process (cf. Nakamura 2010). Debitage sealed in a platform core may have been an unnoticed inclusion in the fill; a bone ring plastered onto the rim of a platform within an otherwise millimetres-thick layer would have been hard to overlook (see Building 49, above). The biographies above omit instances where the embedded artefact was likely negligible to the space-making act they formed part of. Otherwise, I have noted the nature of each deposit alongside its marker in the biographies in §5.2.

Five broad genres of activity appear in Figure 5.40.

(1) Small deposits made in isolation or as part of spatial modifications or repairs: clusters of stones set in newly-built platforms (Building 59), lambs buried in pits (Building 77), fingers set in the foundations of retaining walls (Building 114), etc.

(2) Large aggregations of material connected with the construction and closure of houses: the mass of groundstone tools, animal parts, and foodstuffs deposited around Building 77 at closure, the range of feasting remains and partially-disarticulated human bodies placed in the demolition rubble of Building 114, and similar. We could consider foundation and closure burials as similar acts of aggregating vital material (human bodies) to sanction structural activity (cf. Carter et al. 2015).

(3) Dumps of artefact-rich sediment and large artefact clusters in side-spaces, especially evident in Buildings 49 and 114. These may prefigure the late 7th millennium practice of filling small side spaces with artefacts and then walling them off (§6.4).

(4) Groups of 'empty' pits, which tend to occur in specific parts of a given house (usually 'dirty' segments) within a constrained span of time.

(5) Post retrieval pits during the closure of most buildings.

Here I focus on genres 1, 2 and 3. Although it is difficult to imagine all of these forming a

single, unified kind of practice, they are joined by the process of gathering materials into a space, not to use them in an ongoing fashion, but to embed them into the subsurface at transformative moments. There does not seem to be a hierarchy of economic, ritual or phenomenological value to the matter used in these deposits: for every small deposit of unmodified pebbles there is also one of stalactites (Building 59), massed owl pellets (Building 114), or other striking materials that required substantial effort to procure. Likewise, closure deposits could include unglamorous clay balls alongside raptor talons and decapitated adolescents. Although I will not explore this systematically, many deposited materials, like quern fragments, burnt bricks and timbers, feasting remains or items of jewellery likely had long biographies of their own and connections to specific persons and/or performances. The salient value of deposits may thus have emerged less from the 'exoticness' of the material and more from the convergence of social relationships that objects could index (cf. Nakamura and Pels 2014; Tsoraki 2018).

The overall picture that emerges is that artefact deposition was a ubiquitous 'plug-in' to other space-making activities and community negotiations (Tsoraki 2018). Every building contains such deposits, not just in 'elaborate' areas where bodies were also buried and paintings and sculptures were displayed, but in kitchen areas, near querns and basins, and especially in storage areas (which I suggested in the last section were points of considerable tension around collaboration, sharing, and control). At times when relationships tied together through a house were shifting, people often made an effort to bring together materials (modest or exotic) and to embed these below floors or within features. This need not have required a dramatic ceremony in order to solicit contributions from different stakeholders in the house, quietly materializing a consensus behind the emerging spatial form. In other cases, such as house burnings and foundation deposition, similar processes could take on an aspect of high drama, bringing together a great diversity of participants and materials. Notably, these deposits were rarely dug into and revealed: if there was a visible, surface level demonstration of the social work they achieved, it was the house itself.

Burial

There are two very broad sorts of burial evident in abundance in the biographies above: embedding of bodies in the construction, repair or demolition of houses or features, and sequential burial in platforms. The former appear either as single graves or large collections added at the same moment. They consist primarily of the bodies of infants and young juveniles, as well as partially or fully dismembered bodies of adults (fingers in wall foundations; metatarsals in mortar layers; limbless bodies in platform cores and adolescents

with adult feet where their head should be: see Buildings 114, 3, and 49). Bodies embedded in construction, repair and demolition of walls and other features did not usually invite further burial in the same spot, or the re-opening of graves: in many cases, they sit in segments of the house that saw no 'normal' burials cut through the floors.

Sequential burial in platforms, by contrast, formed long chains of interlinked performances, either by virtue of later inhumations re-opening and rearranging older ones, or by virtue of carefully avoiding previous inhumations even in crowded burial platforms. Often, both patterns are evident within different platforms in the same house, or even within the same platform (compare e.g. Building 77's northeast and north-central platforms, or Building 49's northwest and northeast platforms). These burial phases could span most or all of a building's occupation. In two buildings, burial began near the start of occupation but ended well before closure (Buildings 49, 77); in two, it began after the start of occupation and continued until shortly before closure (Building 3 and likely 114); and in Buildings 1, 52, and 131 burial may have continued throughout the life of each structure, albeit with shifts in the pattern of burial along the way. Where burial either commenced or ended mid-occupation, this was accompanied—usually quite closely—by other transformations in the space: adding horned pillars (Building 77), closing side spaces (Building 49), expanding a platform (Building 114) or partitioning a room in two (Building 3). There are clear differences in the rate and quantity of burial between houses: seven individuals over an estimated 70 years' occupation in Building 52 (Twiss et al. 2008), versus 61 individuals over perhaps a century in Building 1 (Bayliss 2013).

Painting

Most wall paintings at Çatalhöyük were short-lived flourishes of colour and geometry, quickly covered-over by new white plasters. Because of the gracile nature of wall plasters, it is difficult to relate paintings found on them to the floor sequences in buildings with precision. The sequences here reflect best estimates, taking into account recorded wall stratigraphy, excavators' notes, postexcavation interpretation where available, and making reference to postexcavation phasing where no better information is available. Dashed lines in the figures here reflect intermittent painting within a rough window. Longer-lived paintings, including incised panels and panels that seem to have been continuously refreshed over long periods, are represented with solid lines to show their extended insistence.

I noted above that the ornate paintings around Building 49's main burial platforms may have coincided with burial events (cf. Cessford 2005b, 439). This is broadly suggested, too, by the

similar location of paintings and burials in Buildings 77, 131, and 1. The biographical analyses here partially support the proposition. In all four buildings with burial phases in Figure 5.39, intermittent wall painting around the burial platforms does seem to occur; the painted phases overlap mostly, but not completely, with the burial phases. In Building 77, the heavy painting of the north and east walls most likely continues for a time beyond the end of burial in the building, and there are a series of paintings on the east wall of Building 59 (culminating in a long-lived red panel) despite a lack of burials in the building. Thus, although there were circumstances where houses could be painted in non-funerary performances, those circumstances may also have resonated with the kinds of communities drawn together in funerary practice. One surprising result, however, is the observation that few sequences of wall painting continue through to the closure of a given building. Buildings 59 and 114 have limited, long-lived paintings that continued to closure, while only Building 131 had 'flat' (non-incised and not continually refreshed in place) paintings around a large area at the end of its life. Although building closure was a major arena for burial, deposition, and other ritualized activity like burning, painting does not seem to have played a regular role in such events in the 66th century.

Sculpture

Much like paintings, burials, and major depositional events, the *formation* of sculpted clay elements represents short-term, high-intensity creative action. This is especially true of those sculptures that incorporated feasting remains, such as the horns or crania of cattle, into their fabric. We can imagine these emerging at the end of a series of dramatic performances from the kill to butchery, cooking, and eating, up to the transport of skeletal elements and their fixture within a clay and plaster form. Often this happened in conjunction with burial, subsurface embedding, and/or painting, for example when the final burials in Building 77 were inserted between newly-erected bull-horned pillars, or when a pit containing a cluster of stones was inserted into the core of the new, pillar-flanked platform in Building 59. Sculpture was clearly a part of a politics of houses that arrayed communities around dramatic moments.

On the other hand, sculptures acted on different material registers than most other forms of materialized consensus at the site: they *insisted* (often imposingly so) at the surface for a long time. Older and newer sculptures could build up a cumulative effect in ways that other performances could not. Sculpture is also the most differentially distributed kind of feature considered here. Many summarizing studies suggest that sculpture focuses just a few houses at the site (e.g. Kuijt 2018; Mellaart 1967). In part, this is the result of analysts ignoring scars

where truncated sculptures were likely located and fixating on the best-preserved specimens. By going through the unit-level recording of each house and taking a more credulous approach to pits in platform rims, scars on walls, and other features noted by excavators, my data show sculpture to be near-ubiquitous in small amounts. Yet, there remain significant disparities in the extent (and visual imposition) of sculpting in different houses. This disparity does not, however, seem to sort houses into 'sculpture houses' and 'non-sculpture houses': biographically, we see spans of sculptural flourish where features are steadily added to houses like Building 77 and Building 49, but the same buildings have long spans of occupation in which they contain little to no sculpture. Put otherwise: although in parts of their lives bodies, pigments and painters, feasting remains and sculptors all seemed to flow regularly into some buildings, in no building was this permanent and immutable from construction to closure. Rather, the patterns of community action and collaboration that produced highly-sculpted spaces shifted at a faster pace than that at which buildings were established and demolished.

5.6.3 Shifting histories: material registers, knowledge and community

These four broad forms of practice represent diverse strategies for bringing people together, eliciting active participation in space-making, and working through the diversity of stakes and claims arrayed around any single house. Each of them relied on the way histories of dramatic performance and deposition could shape people's ongoing relationship with a space. But they materialized those histories differently: some by embedding matter invisibly in the subsurface, or displaying things for a short time before covering them over; some by repeatedly burying and revealing things; some by displaying skilled 'artistic' productions and keepsakes from dramatic performances.

Interestingly, there is a biographical aspect to these ways of materializing the past of a place. Try this: use your hand to cover the right two-thirds of Figure 5.39, then scan it from top to bottom, counting the number of solid horizontal lines in the 'Paintings' and 'Sculptures' sections. These represent long-term, visual elaborations of each space that were present in its early life. Then shift your hand to the left, covering the *first* two-thirds of the timeline, and scan it again. In almost every house, the number of durable surface elaborations in the form of long-lived painted panels, incised designs, and sculptures increases, sometimes dramatically.

We can see this more clearly if we simplify the sequences and trace the way houses built up buried artefacts, bodies, and sculptures. Table 5.9 divides the timesteps in each house's

Artefact Embedding, Burial and Sculpture by Position in Relative Timeline									
		Quintile of Building's Timesteps							
Building	**Type**	**Found'n**	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**Q5**	**Closure**	**Totals**
49	Surface Embedding	0	3	3	4	0	1	3	14
	Pit w/ Embedding	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	5
	All Artefact Deposits	0	4	4	6	0	1	4	19
	Burials	1	1	5	4	2	1	0	14
	Sculptures visible	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	3
	% Total Arte. Dep.	0%	21%	21%	32%	0%	5%	21%	
	% Total Burials	7%	7%	36%	29%	14%	7%	0%	
	% Sculptures visible	0%	0%	33%	33%	33%	67%	67%	
59	Surface	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	5
	Pit w/ Embedding	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
	All Artefact Deposits	0	2	1	1	1	2	0	7
	Burials	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Sculptures visible	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	3
	% Total Arte. Dep.	0%	29%	14%	14%	14%	29%	0%	
	% Total Burials	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
	% Sculptures visible	0%	0%	0%	33%	67%	67%	0%	
77	Surface	0	0	1	1	0	1	11	14
	Pit w/ Embedding	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
	All Artefact Deposits	1	1	1	1	0	1	11	16
	Burials	8	5	7	4	0	0	0	24
	Sculptures visible	0	0	2	6	5	4	4	7
	% Total Arte. Dep.	6%	6%	6%	6%	0%	6%	69%	
	% Total Burials	33%	21%	29%	17%	0%	0%	0%	
	% Sculptures visible	0%	0%	29%	86%	71%	57%	57%	
114	Surface	0	1	0	1	0	0	9	11
	Pit w/ Embedding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	All Artefact Deposits	0	1	0	1	0	0	9	11
	Burials	0	0	4	2	2	5	1	14
	Sculptures visible	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
	% Total Arte. Dep.	0%	9%	0%	9%	0%	0%	82%	
	% Total Burials	0%	0%	29%	14%	14%	36%	7%	
	% Sculptures visible	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
131	Surface	3	0	0	0	1	0	4	8
	Pit w/ Embedding	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	5
	All Artefact Deposits	5	2	0	0	2	0	4	13
	Burials	6	2	1	1	3	1	0	14
	Sculptures visible	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	% Total Arte. Dep.	38%	15%	0%	0%	15%	0%	31%	
	% Total Burials	43%	14%	7%	7%	21%	7%	0%	
	% Sculptures visible	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
All Buildings	All Artefact Deposits	6	10	6	9	3	4	28	66
	Burials	16	8	17	11	7	7	1	67
	Sculptures visible	0	0	3	9	9	9	7	14
	% Total Arte. Dep.	9%	15%	9%	14%	5%	6%	42%	
	% Total Burials	24%	12%	25%	16%	10%	10%	1%	
	% Sculptures visible	0%	0%	21%	64%	64%	64%	50%	

Shading: 0% 1-9% 10-19% 20-29% 30-39% >40%

Table 5.9. Artefact embedding in surfaces and pits, human burial and sculpture by quintile of timesteps in five 66th century buildings.

Figure 5.41. Biographical tendencies in (a) artefact deposition, (b) burial and (c) sculptural elaboration, using the quintile system.

relative timeline into five quintiles, plus foundation and closure. It traces the number of embedding acts (not a count of artefacts) in pits or surface deposits; the number of burial cuts; and the number of sculptures visibly displayed in each quintile. In order to avoid either letting those houses with the most deposits/burials/sculptures dominate the overall result, or papering over differences of quantity between houses, Table 5.9 gives both absolute counts, and expressions of those counts as a percentage of each building's total. These data are presented visually in Figure 5.41.

There are clear tendencies for different kinds of space-making activity at different points in buildings' lives. Artefact deposition and burial appear throughout each house's biography, but are more frequent in the early-to-middle part of their stratigraphic sequences. Artefact deposition in particular then 'spikes' during the closure of buildings, reflecting the large number of artefact clusters laid on most houses' final floors or in bins and other features. By contrast, most houses went through a substantial portion of their biographies without sculptural elaboration. Few buildings have any evident sculptural display before the mid-point in their relative timelines. Several then see flourishes in the latter half of their lives, with numerous insistent, decorative elements added. When we compare these overall trends in a single graph (Figure 5.42), it becomes clear that performance, display and embedding shifted emphasis over the course of their lives. Where in 'young age' houses tended to be visually unelaborate, hosting series of dramatic depositional and funerary events without long-term markers, in their later years they tended to accumulate lasting, surface-level features derived from important moments in the past. There was a shift in most houses' biographies from a politics of depths, to one of surfaces.

How is it that buildings regularly shifted from being defined especially strongly by what was below their surfaces, to being defined by displays at their surfaces? One possibility is that this is an historical shift in the politics of the North Area: perhaps early 66th century politics was more depth-oriented, and late 66th century politics was more surface-oriented. I will engage with this possibility more fully in Chapter 6, because I do recognize a shift from more depth- to surface-oriented politics across the longer sequence of the site (§6.4). However, both the stratigraphy of the area (Farid 2013b) and preliminary radiocarbon determinations suggest that these buildings' lives were imbricated in time, starting in different points from the late 67th century to the late 66th. It seems unlikely that a short-term historical transition affecting all houses in the area would fall regularly about one-half to three-quarters of the way through each building's stratigraphy. The shifts toward more elaborate surfaces in these biographies is something different than the more gradual transition away from a politics of depth that I trace across the mid- to late-7th millennium in the next chapter.

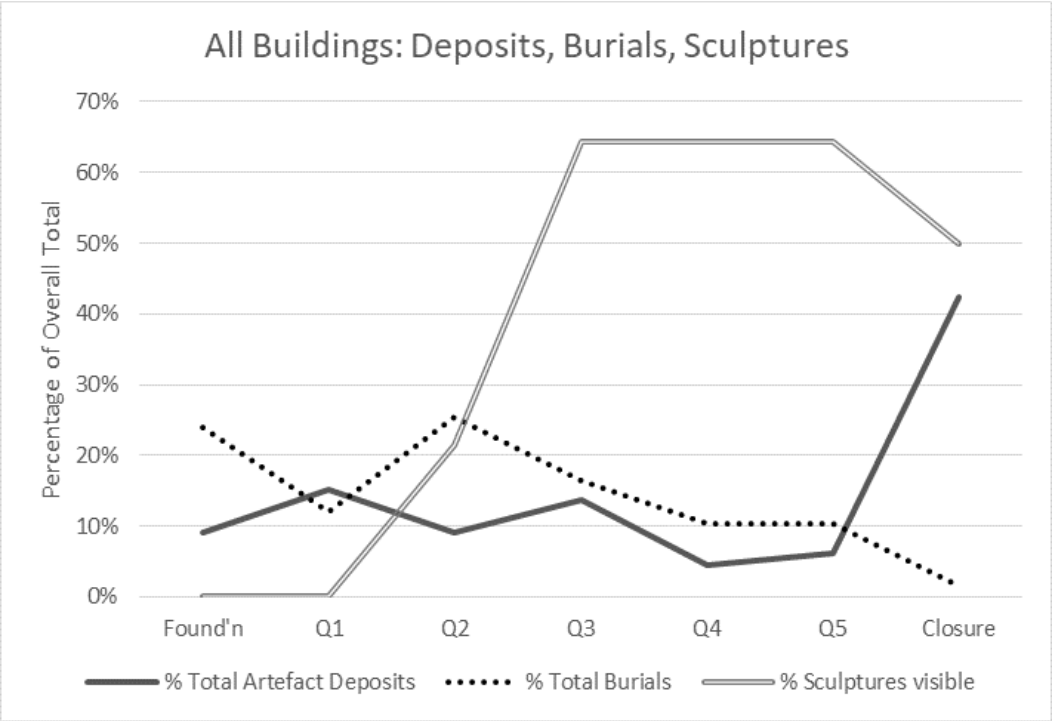


Figure 5.42. Biographical tendencies of artefact deposition, burial and sculptural elaboration: proportion of features deposited/buried/displayed by quintile of the biography in which they occur.

The other possibility is that there was a regularity to the political processes that shaped houses' biographies: that houses aged, gaining social qualities that could not be built into a space from its inception. At the beginning of this chapter, I posed the question: if you descended into a 66th century house, what could you know about its history at a glance? A stranger, entering into a space like Building 49 mid-way through its life, may have had few clues about the range of burials, paintings, and elaborate artefact deposits that had happened there up to that point. Only people with long-standing relationships with the space could fully appreciate the long chain of gatherings and creative decisions that had produced the space. But entering a house to find a highly standardized layout (§5.4.1), white plasters hanging heavy on sculptures and perhaps an incised design on the wall, would have betrayed the building's old age and something of its history at a glance. Houses with accumulations of features still 'leaned back' on the past for their qualities, but they did so less through the politics of human memory, repetition and revelation, and more through visible assertions and vestiges.

Shifting to a more surface mode of politics would have given old houses special political properties in communities at Çatalhöyük. Buchli (2014) has suggested that Çatalhöyük houses were really 'storehouses' of powerful memory, perhaps in connection with specific elders or ritual specialists; if so, each of these eight houses reached a point where it began storing memory differently than the younger houses in the neighbourhood. Perhaps, as

Wright (2014), Hodder and Pels (2010) and Kuijt (2018) have suggested, this allowed some houses to play distinct roles as gathering places, empowered by more visible histories that were less contingent on individual memory. However, identifying surface-oriented politics as a biographical phenomenon means we cannot designate some structures as central and others peripheral to history-making at the site. As houses' lives were imbricated in time, the exact locations of old houses on the tell would have shifted around over the years, as some houses were closed (perhaps becoming 'young again') and others 'grew into old age'. Certainly, this challenges the idea that entire house sequences, beginning at the bottom of the mound, represent centuries-long, linear accumulations of memory, as in the history house hypothesis (Hodder and Pels 2010). There were multiple ways to politically activate the past of a place at Çatalhöyük—and to project the present forward to shape the future—that activated different potentials of materials like clay, bone and pigment. Houses modulated between these over the course of their lives, and were repositioned in relation to others in the process. Whatever the role of history, memory, and material vestiges of the past were in human relationships in the 66th century, they did not set the spatiality of communities in stone; in fact, by ageing, houses set communities in motion.

5.6.4 Meaningful spaces in changing communities

Living in the 66th century saw people collaborate flexibly with space, and with one another. As social actors, houses did not have neatly consolidated and stable identities; and human lives' spatial footing was always negotiable. In the course of a decade or two, however, a person would have helped to build houses and to gather things together to bury in foundations, investing care in places and people. She would have seen close collaborators, acquaintances, and neighbourhood children buried; eaten at feasts, perhaps helping to hunt, butcher or cook; and she would have seen horns, ribs, metatarsals disappear into side rooms floors or be mounted on pillars. All of this built up a landscape of meaningful places on the tell, defined by memory, intentions, stories, debates, and diverse forms of re-encounter. It is quite likely that people's identities likewise changed as *they* accumulated knowledge of the subsurface and history of the world around them, and as older people with deeper memories passed away and became the bodies below the floor (Meskell 2008; Nakamura and Meskell 2009). In a world where the subsurface supported the surfaces people relied on and where people were regularly called on to seal objects and people into places, histories of collaboration in feasting, burial, deposition, and construction would have vitally informed the linkages between spaces and human lives. As many commentators have noted before, the politics of houses at Çatalhöyük was very much a politics of places' pasts (Buchli 2014; Hodder 2005, 2018; Weismantel 2014).

What a material political view helps to do is to focus on the way the materiality of history in this place and time shaped its social implications, and how intersecting dynamics in any one body, deposit, wall or sculpture seeded the built environment with tensions and consequences for the future. We have seen how the additive nature of space-making in the 66th century more generally—plaster layer sealing plaster layer and house resting atop house—generated different potentials for action through spaces' surfaces (demarcation, display, painting) and through spaces' depths (deposition, superimposition, burial and revelation). The array of practices that helped shape memories and histories varied in their contingencies and consequences. They created different kinds of encounters with the past (reopening of graves; dramatic horned pillars; niches marking closed passageways between buildings to those 'in the know'). They also created different kinds of human relationships with a house: some people knew exactly who was buried where in a house; some people had partial knowledge; and others knew little that wasn't immediately visible or told to them by others.

The fact that houses' roles in daily practice and dramatic performances shifted through their lives shakes up the idea that memory was a conservative force at Çatalhöyük, reinforcing the integrity of the house and household over centuries (Hodder and Cessford 2004). If people worked with space to project the past into the future, it was because the future was up for debate. Different kinds of space-making emphasized different kinds of moments, brought together different scales or varieties of community and left diverse material and social vestiges to shape future practice in a space. Nakamura and Pels (2014, 218) expresses this elegantly: a politics of depth 'serves to mark a specific moment in the present (generally a moment of transition . . .), which, as it recedes into the past, comes to articulate a linear (vertical) historical record'. That 'vertical record' meant that, in times of uncertainty and change, a powerful possibility was to revisit old forms and history-rich locations, either by citing old performances in new ones or by physically revealing and re-engaging buried walls, bodies, or material culture in new projects. The result was a tendency toward *spatial* resonance through centuries of social transformation (see §6.4). But in the 66th century, a subtly different way of activating the past became prominent. Old houses were construed as particular kinds of places, not by populating the subsurface with meaningful matter but by displaying trophies of past gatherings. At the time, this may have been a subtle conceptual distinction: after all, both surface-oriented and depth-oriented strategies projected forward the social work of feasts, funerals, and gatherings. But as we will see in the next chapter, a politics of surfaces opened up new possibilities for creating social consensus and sustaining a house, possibilities that would ultimately sever the 'vertical record' of material performance linking structures to their predecessors through years of change in day-to-day relationships.

5.7 Conclusion: living (in) houses in the 66th century

Looking at the houses in a 66th century neighbourhood in biographical perspective opens up a richer politics than we could see before. People no longer spring into being in neat, integral units when a house is built, retaining clear boundaries and social qualities for decades until the house is demolished. Social structure becomes less a question of the way people were bounded off from one another by walls, and more about the way they came together, collaborating with diverse and active materials to steadily reconceive their communities.

This chapter has begun to sketch in the dynamics of 66th century communities as they were shaped by making space.

- I have shown how a number of aspects of Çatalhöyük houses that have traditionally been taken as evidence for social 'modularity' in fact represent common material resources for navigating blurred boundaries and shifting, multilateral communities. Houses were laid out in similar ways, with assemblages of ridges, platforms, benches and screen walls—but not because each housed similar, discrete groups of people. Rather, people modified houses' layouts in moments of far-reaching social change. Spaces with increasing *friction* were at once highly flexible and amenable to situational division or coordination of activities running in parallel. The broad guidelines that virtually all houses followed suggest a baseline orientation in space from which people improvised specific arrangements of practice.

- 66th century houses were criss-crossed by vital metabolic practices. A single house rarely contained the full range of food storage, processing, and cooking features that people needed to live. Instead, people embraced the *creative potential of dependency*: actively unequipping houses for vital tasks to avoid self-sufficiency and relying on multiple buildings to meet fundamental human needs. Some houses had clear, long-lasting associations with specific practices, while other capacities came and went around them. Others had constantly-transforming metabolic roles. This suggests a greater diversity of metabolic communities than a modular household-based interpretation can accommodate, and suggests that intimate communities were considerably less stable than the houses they lived in.

- Despite their changing roles in daily practice, houses took on more durable associations and identities. A primary way in which this occurred was through small and large gatherings of people, which helped articulate a clear consensus behind a structure and materialized it through the deposition of artefacts and bodies or the production of paintings and sculptures. In the 66th century, houses took on a quality of social 'old age'; they transitioned at some point in their biography from histories constructed through burial, embedding, and short-term display, to histories materialized in more durable sculptures and incised paintings. Although broadly commemorative activity did help to construct durable social qualities in houses, then, the exact historical qualities any house had were not fixed, and the location of practices like burial and feasting-trophy display in the neighbourhood would have shifted around considerably with time.

All of this suggests a somewhat different social model than any that has been proposed for

Çatalhöyük's apogee, and helps to resolve some outstanding paradoxes in our understanding of the site. Summarizing research often diverges into considerations of 'household' tasks and 'communal' activities, with little clear intersection between them (§2.4.4). Archaeologists have taken houses as stable metabolic units and disagreed at length about how those 'modules' were assembled into larger groupings. What each kind of data presented here suggests is that the resonance between feasting and daily cooking, sculpture and storage, or burial and sleeping is not to be found in sum totals of things, but in moments of intersection. Sculpture *did* have something to do with storage when Building 49's side space was closed off with an ornamented wall; burial *did* have something to do with cooking when burial in Building 77 ended around the same time its sprawling southern kitchen was consolidated. If we start from a practice-based, more-than-human understanding of what a community is, then Çatalhöyük houses appear as vital participants in many communities, cross-cutting conventional domains. The humble or striking moments that make up their biographies appear as turning points at the intersection of communities they played parts in, where working with material space set out new terms for shared futures.

Chapter 6

From the bottom up: making space, 7000–6300 BCE

6.1 Introduction

> *I discovered history in houses. . . . Old houses dutifully exhibited a distinct regional character, but the more I analyzed them, the more I felt that the big story was historical change.*
>
> Henry Glassie, *Vernacular Architecture* (2000, 116)

The forms that houses take in a place and time tell us about much more than the practicalities of daily life. This is because domestic communities do not live *in* houses; they *work with them*. If communities are not entities that exist, but collaborations in action—in guiding change—then the story of houses' becoming is also the story of society taking shape, steadily opening up possibilities and closing off others. Domestic architecture, for all its intimacy, becomes a central field of material politics: concrete action that defines the territory into which the future might move.

The open-ended dramas and pressing challenges of community life at Çatalhöyük were integral parts of the process of community. Relationships among people, and between people and space, never reached a state of equilibrium, nor were they meant to. This chapter investigates the way their material politics directed the resulting change, building a narrative of material political transformation from about 7000 to 6300 BCE. It uses houses' biographies to reflect on the work of crafting liveable spaces and more-than-human communities as this transformed Çatalhöyük and its larger world.

The first two sections of the chapter introduce the biographies of new houses: three from the earliest centuries of the tell, and three from after its mid-7th millennium apogee and subsequent transition to a sparser, more open settlement plan. The following two take up thematic topics. The first investigates how space making fitted houses into already-vibrant communities by working with buried walls, bodies, artefacts and by setting up material and social conditions for future action. It builds the argument that, although history-making and the materialization of consensus were important dynamics throughout the 7th millennium at Çatalhöyük, a shift pioneered in the mid-7th millennium toward more *surface-oriented*

politics had dramatic consequences for the shape of houses—and of Çatalhöyük society more broadly—over the following centuries. The second section follows the way houses were laid out and equipped with metabolic features. By following the changing shapes of house biographies through the centuries, it reveals the waxing and waning of salient *political dimensions*, showing how the overall tenor of material politics changed as a result of constantly reshaping living space. Finally, the third section relates the trajectory of material political change visible at Çatalhöyük to changes ongoing in the larger region at the time: the sudden development of a vast and rapidly-expanding network of small farming settlements across Anatolia (and into Europe) from about 6700 BCE onward, transforming the Neolithic from a regional to a global phenomenon. As we will see, this—one of the most consequential turning points in recent human history—may have had a great deal more to do with intimate life and its material participants than conventional narratives tend to grasp. The material politics of houses at Çatalhöyük thus emerges as a narrow but meaningful window into truly transformative forces in past worlds.

6.2 Houses and neighbourhoods, 7000–6600 BCE

In the early 7th millennium Çatalhöyük grew substantially as new buildings were built around the site's edge and open spaces within the settlement were filled in (§2.4.3). Among the newly-built houses were buildings that would be rebuilt in place through the middle of the millennium. As open space was converted to architecture, spatial precedent was established that would resonate through the life of the tell for centuries. All known early 7th millennium buildings in the South Area have at least one rebuild in their sequence. Repetitions of building layout, artistic motifs and clear 'citations' between burials in superimposed houses have further reinforced the picture of spatial and institutional continuity through the early and middle levels at Çatalhöyük (Hodder and Pels 2010).

Here I consider three early 7th millennium house biographies at critical junctures in this process. (1) Building 2 is the second and final rebuild in a sequence that is potentially older than the others in this area. Despite a long and busy history as a house, the structure was converted to a sheep pen and outdoor activity area, then demolished and used as the base for a long-lived midden. (2) Building 17 to the south may have filled the last open 'gap' in the South Area, producing a continuous built landscape through our excavated window. It was the bottom-most building in one of the most elaborate sequences of superimposed structures yet excavated, Mellaart's 'Shrine 10' sequence. (3) Building 160 to the east is (depending how a major renovation of the underlying structure is reckoned) the second or third rebuild in its sequence, likely constructed during Building 17's use-life or indeed after it. It was

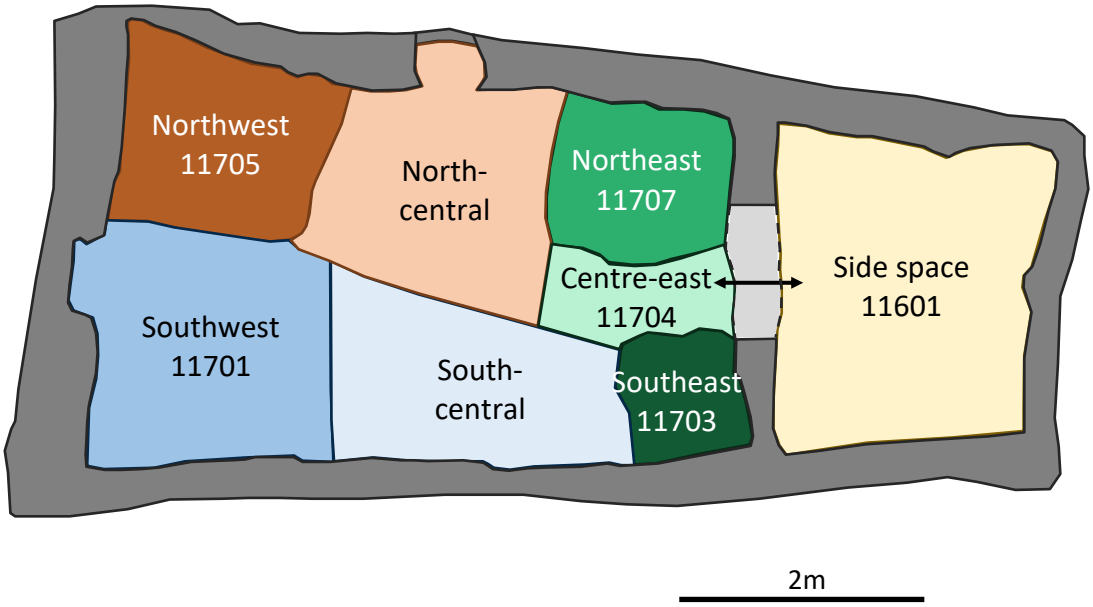


Figure 6.1. Plan of Building 2, with segments shown.

rebuilt again after closure. Building 160 thus represents a structure in the middle of a long-lived building sequence, and is situated at the transition from generations of expansion and densification to a time when radical architectural density was fully established. To these, we can add the fragmentary biography of Building 18 that I developed in Chapter 3 (§3.4) These biographies, taken together, help us to consider the range of dynamics evident during the settlement's early centuries through the lens of intimate communities and space-making practice.

6.2.1 Building 2

Relative timeline: Appendix A.8. Excavation Report: Farid (2005a).

Building 2 was built atop an earlier Building 9, which appears to have been fitted between Buildings 18 and 23 to the south and unexposed buildings to the north. Eventually these buildings to the north and south would be joined up with others to form rows, with the Building 9-2 sequence wedged in between. This would account for the unusual long, narrow shape of the two buildings. Despite its elongated plan, Building 2 contained a characteristic range of features and spatial segments for an early 7th millennium house. This included platforms in the northwest, northeast, and southeast corners; southwestern and south central kitchen areas; a 'clean' unelevated north-central area; and an eastern side space (unexcavated) accessed through a crawlhole between the northeast and southeast platforms (Figure 6.1).

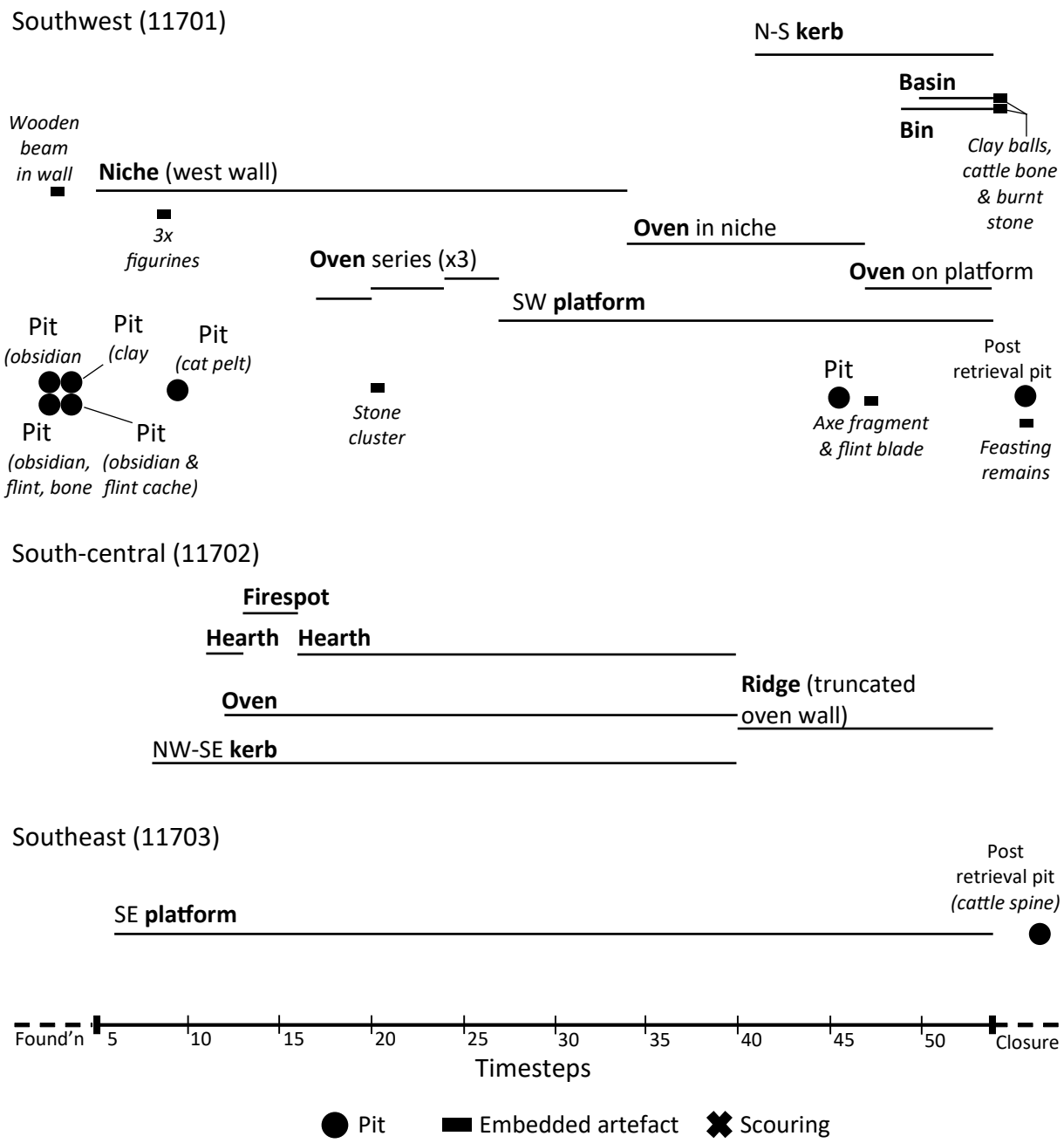


Figure 6.2. Timeline. Features in the southern half of Building 2.

The most dynamic area in Building 2 was its kitchen areas. In the earliest occupation of the building, dirty floors and ash trample built up across both the southwest and south-central segments. It is peculiar to have ash build-up in lieu of a fire installation, and it may be that an early oven in the area was completely truncated by later features. However, by the evidence recorded in the field, the earliest ovens in both the southwest and southeast postdate this initial phase of use. A number of special deposits date to either this phase of floor accumulation, or the foundation of the building. These include several 'caches' of

Figure 6.3. The south-central kitchen area in Building 2, after conversion of the southwest ovens to a platform. Facing south. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

obsidian, a collection of figurines sealed in plaster within a niche in the western wall, and a set of cat paw bones suggested to be the remains of a pelt or skin bag in a small pit.

A long ridge was run diagonally across the middle of the room from the northwestern platform to the southeastern one. After this, fire installations were built in both the southwest and south-centre. The phasing of this building attributes one oven per phase, and situates the south-central oven between the third and fourth southwest ovens (Farid 2005a). There is no stratigraphic basis for this, and the more literal stratigraphic reading captured by the relative timeline suggests that the south-central oven could have been built before any of the southwestern ovens, and continued throughout the lives of most of the southwest ovens.

The first three southwestern ovens were set one atop the other in sequence in the southwestern corner of the room. After the third was closed, a platform was built encasing its truncated remains. A new oven was built shortly thereafter within the western niche, opening east into the room. The south-central oven F.269 was accompanied by a series of hearths next to its mouth (Figure 6.3); it may have been in use up to the construction of the fourth southwest oven (in the niche), or even for some time after. Then it was demolished and fragments of it spread across the south of the room within a thick (up to 10cm in places) clay levelling layer that also closed the hearth. F.269's superstructure protruded through the subsequent floors, creating a horseshoe-shaped ridge that may have served as a basin. No further ovens or hearths were built in the south-central area, and eventually a north-south kerb divided the

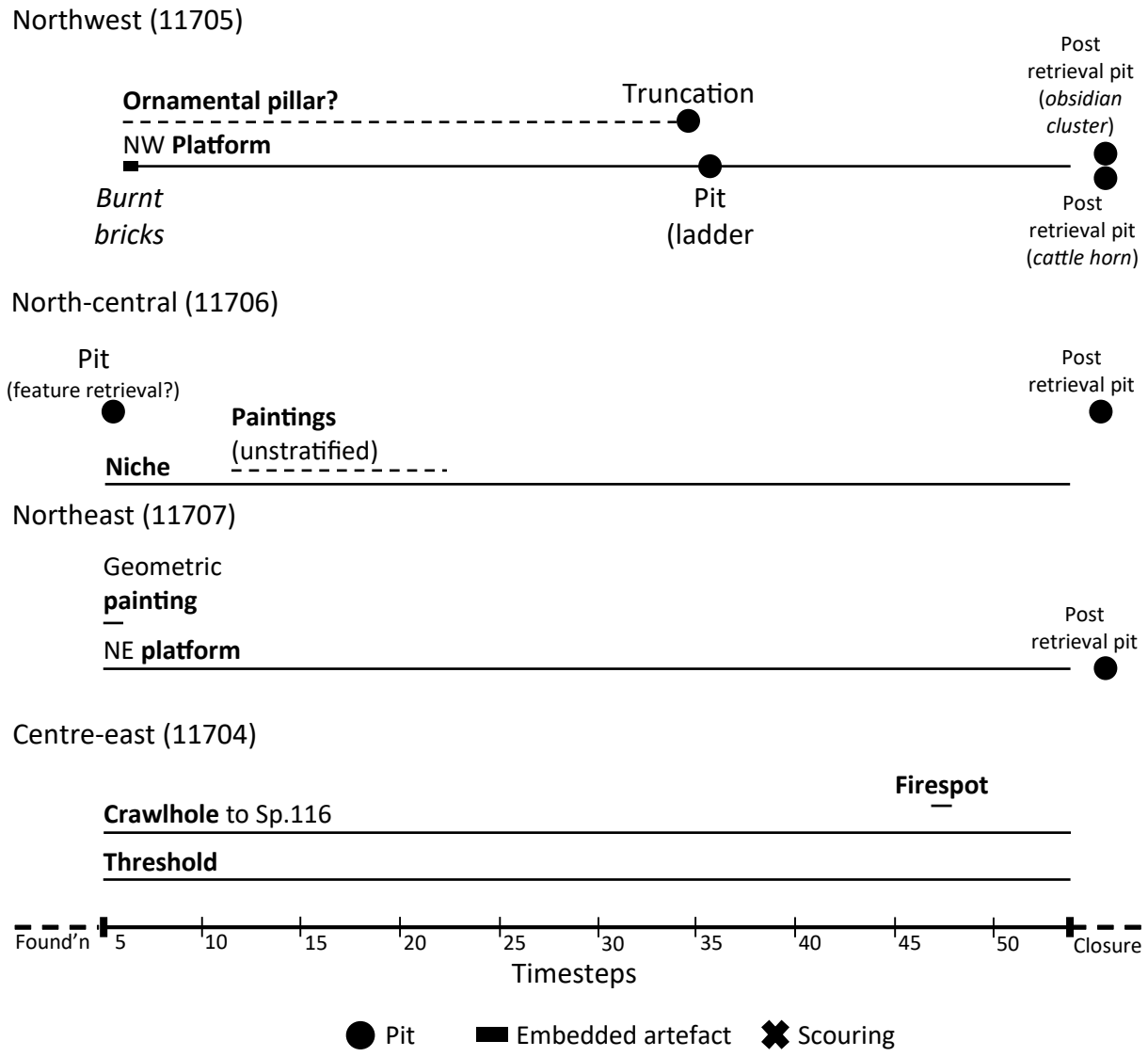


Figure 6.4. Timeline. Features in the northern half of Building 2.

continuing kitchen area in the southwest from the south-centre. The final oven in Building 2 was built atop the southwestern platform. It was uniquely fitted with a basin atop its dome and a bin along its side wall.

Building 2's platforms were relatively less dynamic. Two areas of geometric wall painting are known, around the north-central niche and on the internal wall north of the crawlhole. The latter is securely situated among the early layers of plaster on the wall (i.e. early in occupation) and the north-central painting is also likely an early feature of the space. The northwestern platform contained the ladder entry, with one incident of repair/replacement evident. Truncation cuts in the flank of this platform may represent removal of some sort of sculptural element, perhaps in tandem with the construction of an oven in the western wall adjacent to the platform. No burials were made in this building.

The most striking parts of Building 2's biography come at its closure. The building does not see a neat sequence of artefact deposition, post retrieval and demolition like many buildings of the time. Instead, penning deposits proliferated across the space. It is unclear whether the oven continued in use during this period, but given the site-wide tendency to keep residential areas meticulously clean it seems unlikely that the building continued as a primary residence while sheep dung and omnivore (human/canine) faeces built up across the space (Farid 2005a, 168–170). If the kitchen area was used, it may be better to think of it as an auxiliary cooking space for people whose primary residential ties had moved elsewhere. In any case, after a period of perhaps several years of penning build-up, posts around the perimeter of the room were retrieved, and a spread of assorted large mammal bone, including many articulated joints, was scattered on surfaces and in postholes. The bin and basin linked to the southwest oven were packed full of clay balls, burnt stones, and animal bones. The building was then partially collapsed, and the shell of it was used as a midden area into the middle of the 7th millennium (likely several hundred years).

6.2.2 Building 17

Relative timeline: Appendix A.9. Excavation Report: Farid (2005a); Carpentier and Lundin (2015); Taylor (2016a, 2017a, forthcoming).

Building 17 was built atop a previously open area between Building 18 and Building 162/161 (the precursors to Building 160, see below). The space below was originally a penning area, and also contained a large outdoor oven. In the time leading up to the house's construction, a series of burials—some intercutting, implying passage of time—were made. This parallels three other buildings considered here (Building 77; Building 65) built on open space with protracted outdoor burial sequences in the run-up.

Building 17's stratigraphy is among the most challenging in my dataset, especially in the first half of its occupation. This is because the building was not excavated in one steady progression; its later occupation was excavated in the 1990s, and the remainder of the sequence was not excavated until 2015-17. As a result of 15 years' exposure, a thick portion of stratigraphy was weathered to the point that individual floor layers could not be discerned, and underlying features and strata were difficult to recognize in excavation (cf. Carpentier and Lundin 2015, 46). Effectively, this produces a time-compressed phase of unknown real-time duration within which the sequence or contemporaneity of features is impossible to judge. The Harris matrix captures this with two 'choke points' that split the matrix in three: stratigraphy before the worst-weathered layers, features dating to sometime within the weathered phase, and features excavated in the '90s and postdating the weathered phase. In

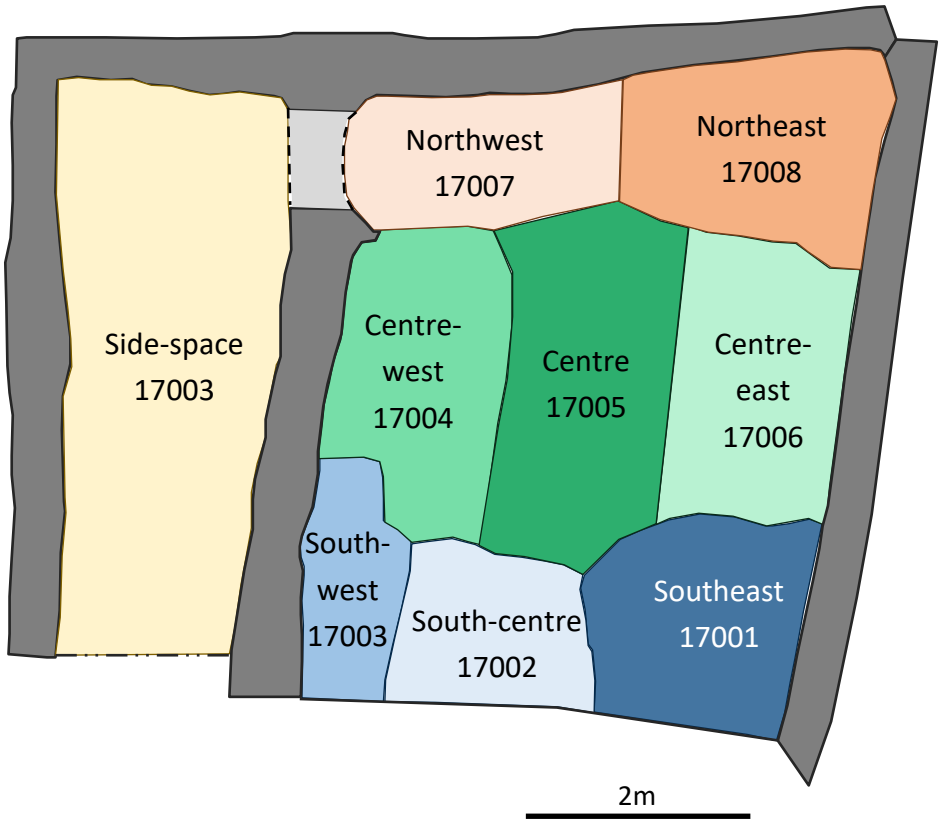


Figure 6.5. Plan of Building 17, with segments shown.

my timelines, I have added a marker along the x-axis marking off the timesteps that were 'blurred' by weathering; readers should bear in mind that in pristine form this part of the timeline would stretch much further, and events within the marked span that are shown as contemporaneous need not have really been so.

Despite these caveats, Building 17's biography is long and especially dynamic. Its construction saw a number of foundation burials added (in addition to the underlying burial ground); one of these burials later had its cranium retrieved with a precisely-targeted pit (Figure 6.6). The east wall in particular was an object of some concern, with a row of obsidian and stone artefacts and an entire lamb buried within its foundations. It is worth noting that, after Building 17's closure, the structure's footprint may have been used as an auxiliary space for Building 162/161's successor (see below); this coupled with a depositional focus on Building 17's east side may indicate ongoing concern with the entanglement of these two adjacent building sequences.

Throughout its life Building 17's floor plan was divided with a shifting set of kerbs and rises into five basic areas (which were sometimes further subdivided). A broad strip of white-plastered space spanned the middle of the room, with the centre-west sometimes raised as a

Figure 6.6. Pre-foundation, foundation and early occupation events in Building 17. Top: Burial F.8049 with its lower half cut by F.8450, whose cranium is retrieved by a targeted pit. Bottom: lamb remains in east wall foundation cut. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

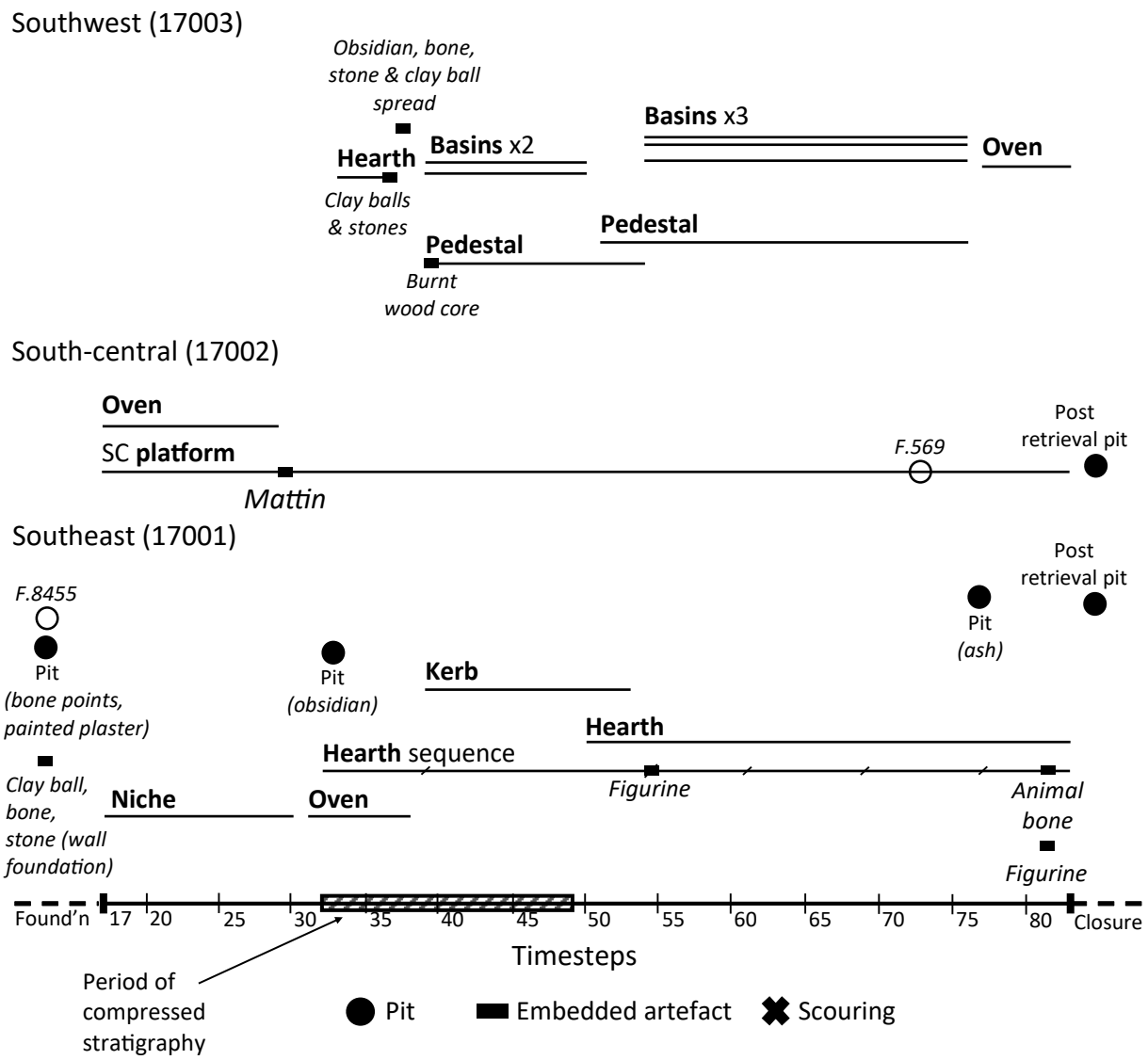


Figure 6.7. Timeline. Features in the southern part of Building 170.

platform and sometimes not. Ashy-floored areas were located to the north and in the southeast, and there was an elevated area in the southwest/south-centre that sometimes served as a raised kitchen or basin area. During the earliest years of Building 17's occupation, prior to the worst-weathered phase, ovens and hearths are evident in the northeast, the southeast, and the southwest/south-centre; although it cannot be demonstrated beyond doubt, it is possible that all three were in use at the same time. By the time of the severely weathered stratigraphy, there were two ovens built side-by-side in the northeast and a further oven cut through the south wall in the southeast, one hearth in the southeast and one in the southwest corner.

Most of the 14 occupation-phase burials in Building 17 occurred during the badly-weathered phase. Unlike in the 66th century houses in Chapter 5, burials in Building 17 (and Building

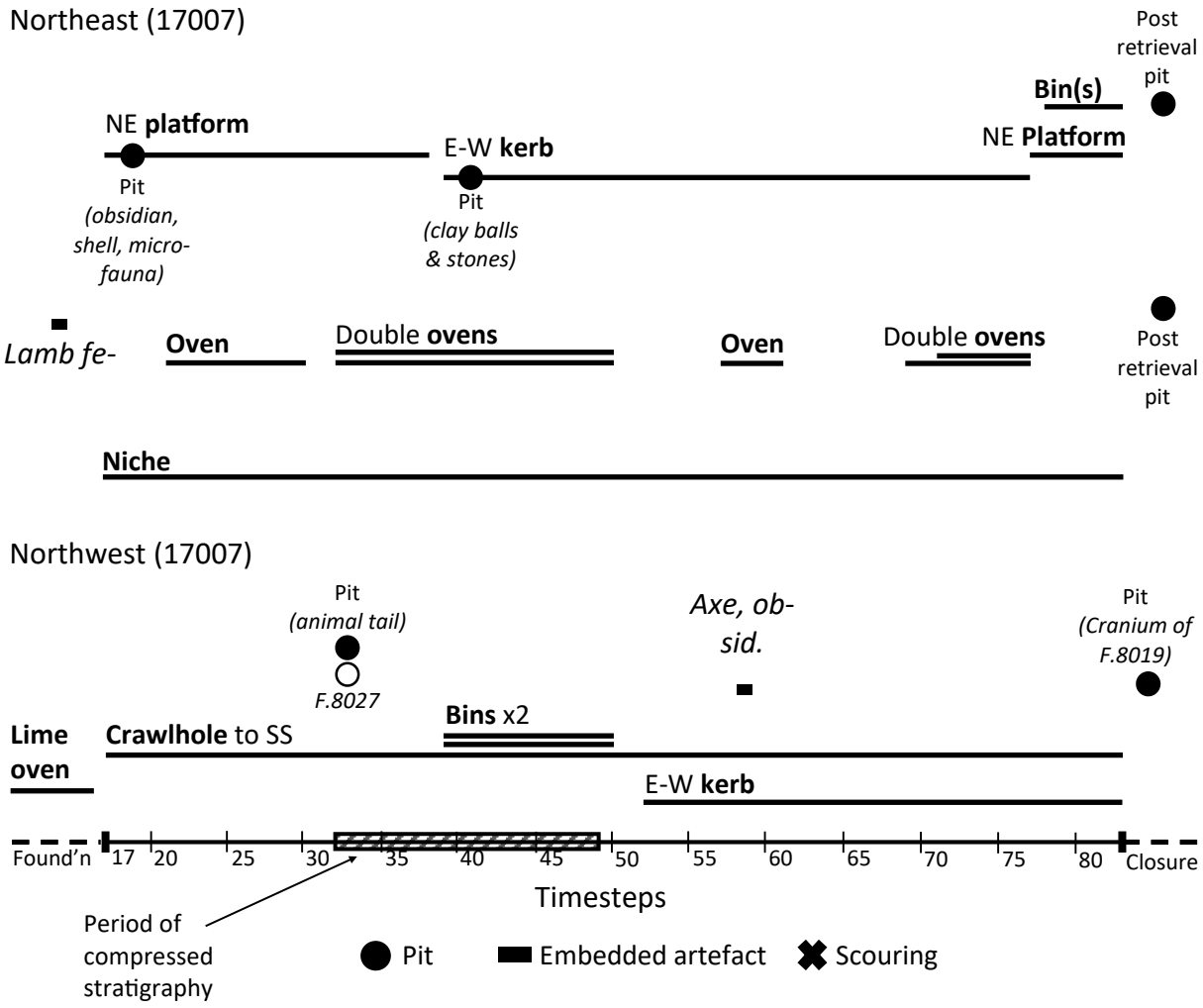


Figure 6.8. Timeline. Features in the northern part of Building 170.

160, next section) were spread across unraised space rather than concentrated in platforms. Rather than carefully recutting the same graves time and again, most burials did not disturb their predecessors. On the other hand, this arrangement makes the events where burials *were* related to previous inhumations more striking as feats of memory: previous burials could be precisely located in broad and apparently unmarked spaces without the help of platforms as guides. Indeed, burial in Building 17 culminates in the first half of a remarkable sequence: an older female buried late in the house's occupation in the south-central platform with a strand of unfinished beads of a particular type (faux deer canine teeth). This burial is notable because, after the rest of Building 17's occupation, a possible hiatus in the building sequence, and the construction of Building 6 above, an infant was buried in almost the exact same location along with anklets of finished faux deer canine beads (Farid 2005b, 261–262, 2005a, 202).

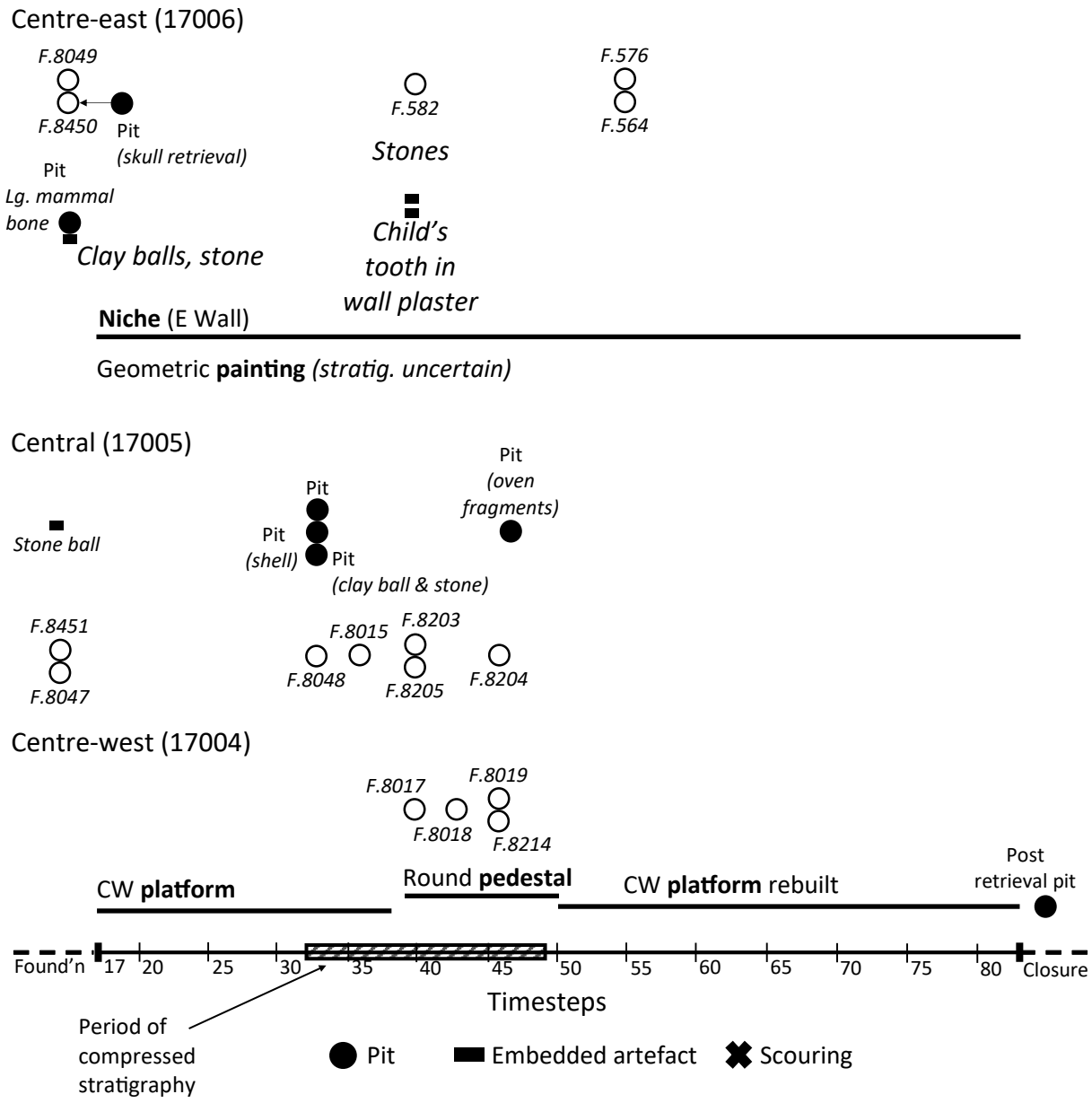


Figure 6.9. Timeline. Features in the central part of Building 170.

Emerging from the badly-weathered phase, Building 17 had a series of ovens—some single-chambered, some double-chambered—in the northeast, and two hearths in the southeast. Two apparent gaps in the oven sequence may indeed indicate an ovenless phase but could also be due to the relative timeline method 'stretching' modifications to the low partition between the northeast and central area. There were also bins located along the north wall west of the ovens, and a complex of basins was gradually expanded in the southwest corner (sealing the earlier hearth there). The central clean floors apparently overtopped the centre-west platform in this time, creating an uninterrupted expanse across the middle of the room; a small, circular raised area in the centre west is a unique feature of unknown function.

In the final phase of its occupation, Building 17's organization effectively 'flipped', with the northeastern ovens and southwestern processing features swapping places. The oven was shifted to the southwest, sitting atop the complex of basins that had been located there. Over the northeastern ovens, a platform was built. A number of bins and/or basins were built atop this platform. Unfortunately, these survived demolition in a highly fragmentary state, and it is impossible to determine exactly how many features of this sort were located in the northeast from the truncated bits that were excavated; note, then, that while my timelines and derived data show only one bin in this part of the structure's life, the real number was likely higher. Meanwhile, the series of hearths in the southeastern area continued throughout the second half of the building's life, and were focal points for repeated, minor deposition. This includes two near-identical anthropomorphic figurines, deposited several hearth rebuilds apart but very similar in form (another clear demonstration of careful remembrance).

Building 17's western side-space was only excavated to its final occupation, when it contained a single basin. Beyond this, there are no known features in the space, although it provided ample room for portable storage or processing. Several plaster 'shelves' protruded from the north wall of the main space over the access hole; although these features are poorly understood, it is worth noting that in all early buildings considered here wall features sit next to the side space entrance (a geometric painting in Building 2, ambiguous plaster shelves in Building 17, and a truncated post-like feature in Building 160).

Building 17 was closed without fanfare: the only depositional act was the retrieval of a cranium from F.8019 and its redeposition in the northwest posthole (below the location of a cranium-retrieval burial in Building 6). A truncated bin sits atop the stub of Building 17's eastern wall, and the western face of Building 160's western wall has traces of plaster on it. Excavators hypothesize that, after demolition, the building's footprint may have been used as a short-lived auxiliary space to Building 160 to the east. After this, Building 6 was constructed with an internal layout similar to Building 17 in its middle phase (with ovens in the northeast, burials in the centre and a raised southwest/south-central area). This sequence would continue through to the mid-7th millennium as Mellaart's 'Shrine 10', among the most ornate structures excavated in the 1960s (Mellaart 1967).

6.2.3 Building 160

Relative timeline: Appendix A.10. Excavation report: Taylor (2015); Barański et al. (2016).

Building 160 was the second rebuild of the Building 162/161 sequence, which continued into the mid-7th millennium. Building 162/161 (doubly-named due to a major modification

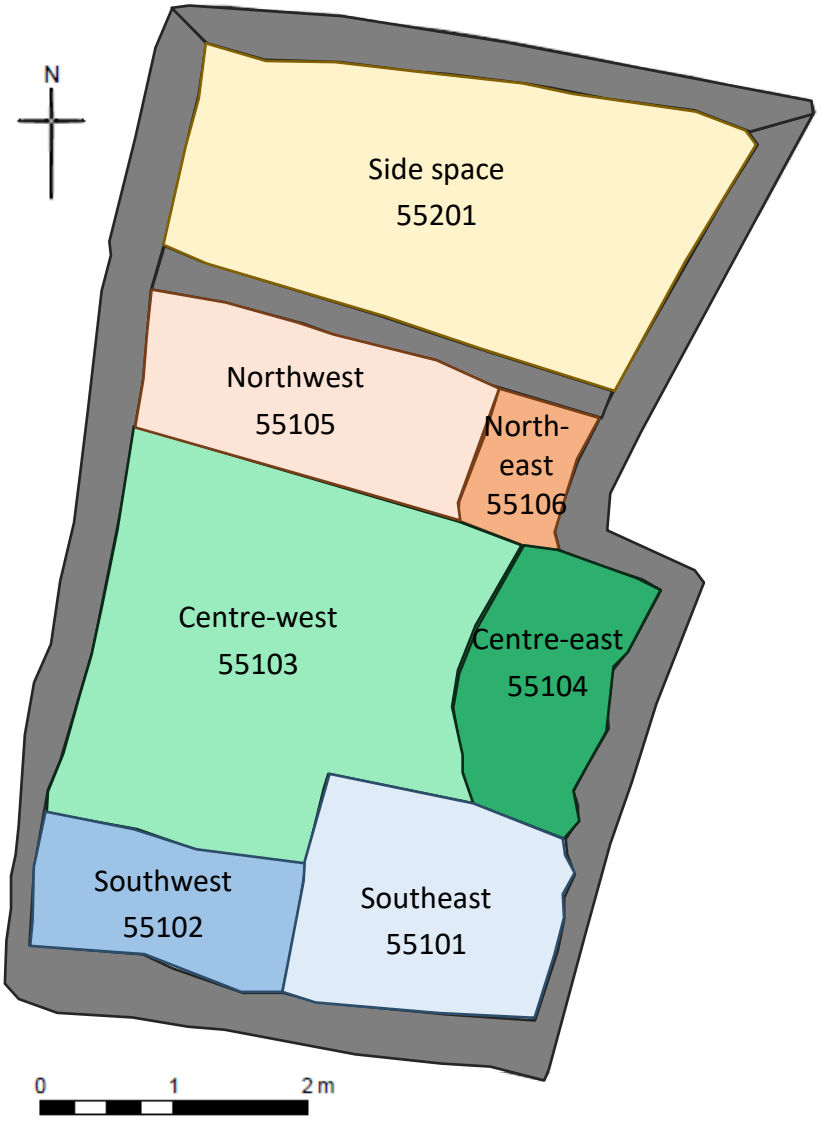


Figure 6.10. Plan of Building 160 with segments shown.

episode that raised the floors with 50cm of rubble, perhaps derived from roof rebuilding (Taylor 2017b)) has only been excavated in the northern half of its main room, which contained a partition wall cordoning off an oven area in the northeast from a burial area in the centre of the room. In this way it prefigured the layout of Building 160. At closure, a dead juvenile was laid on the final floors of Building 162/161 against the partition wall.

In its earliest form, Building 160 had two kitchen areas: in the south below the ladder entry, and in the northeast near the entry to its northern side-space. It may also have had a western side-space briefly, built atop the infill of Building 17 (see above); if so, this was closed and severely truncated when Building 6 was built. Initially there was only one platform in Building 160, in the southwest corner. The middle of the room was a white-plastered unraised area.

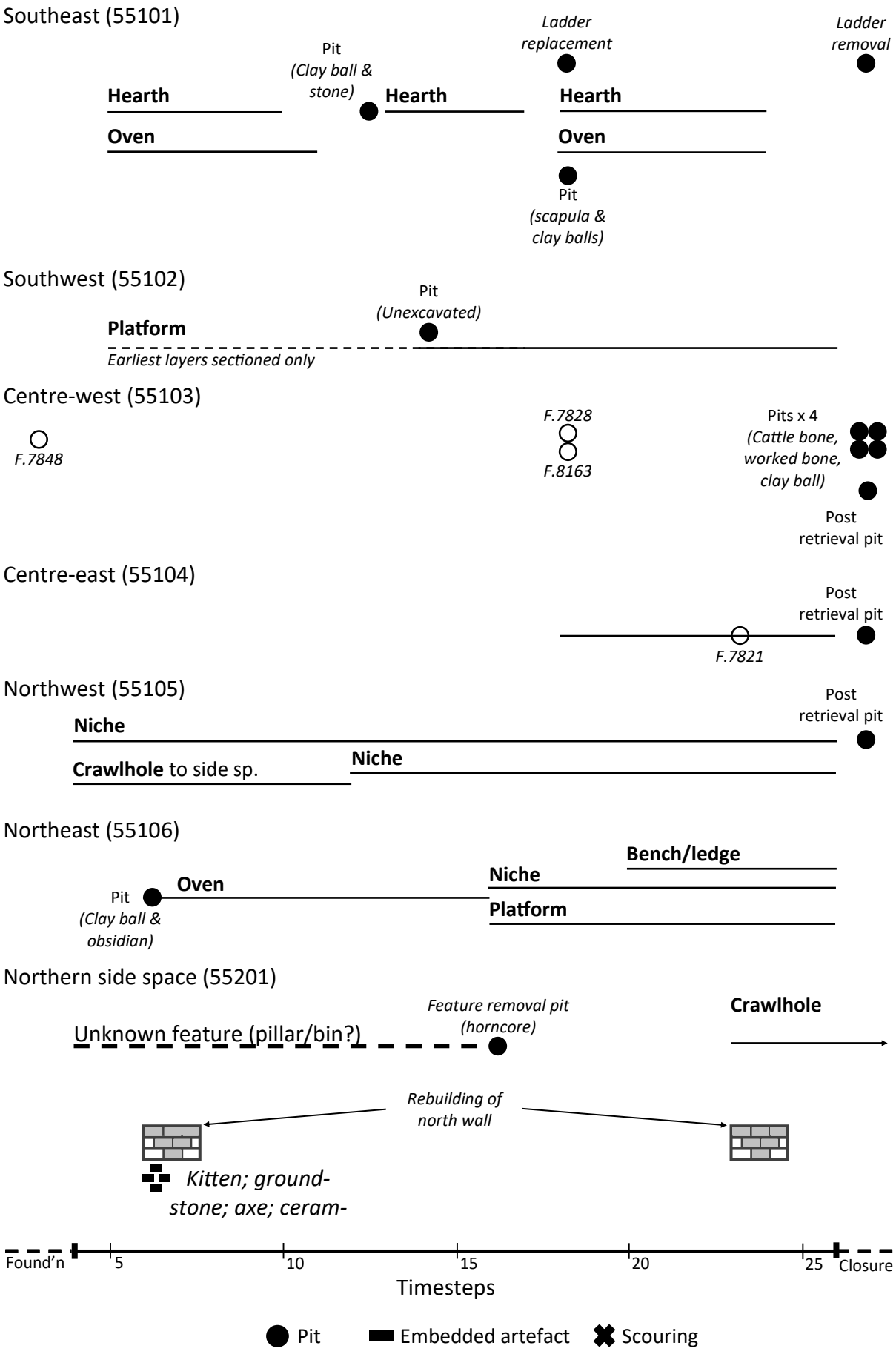


Figure 6.11. Timeline. Features in Building 160.

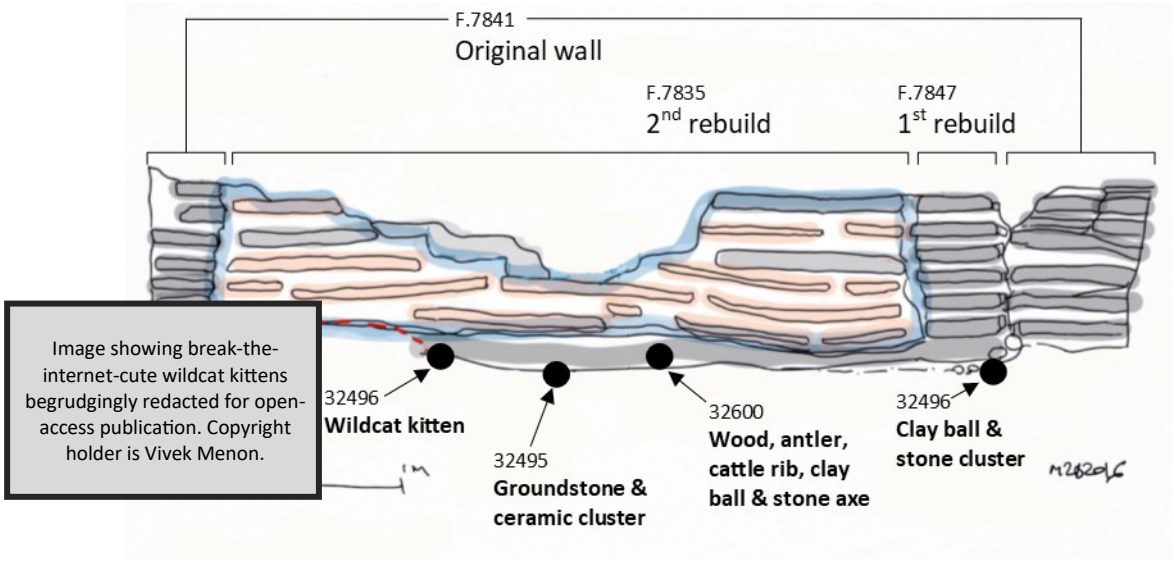


Figure 6.12. Deposits below rebuilding of the north wall of Building 160. Modified from a field sketch by Marek Barański. Base image used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project). Inset: *Felis chaus* kittens: Menon 2014, 255.

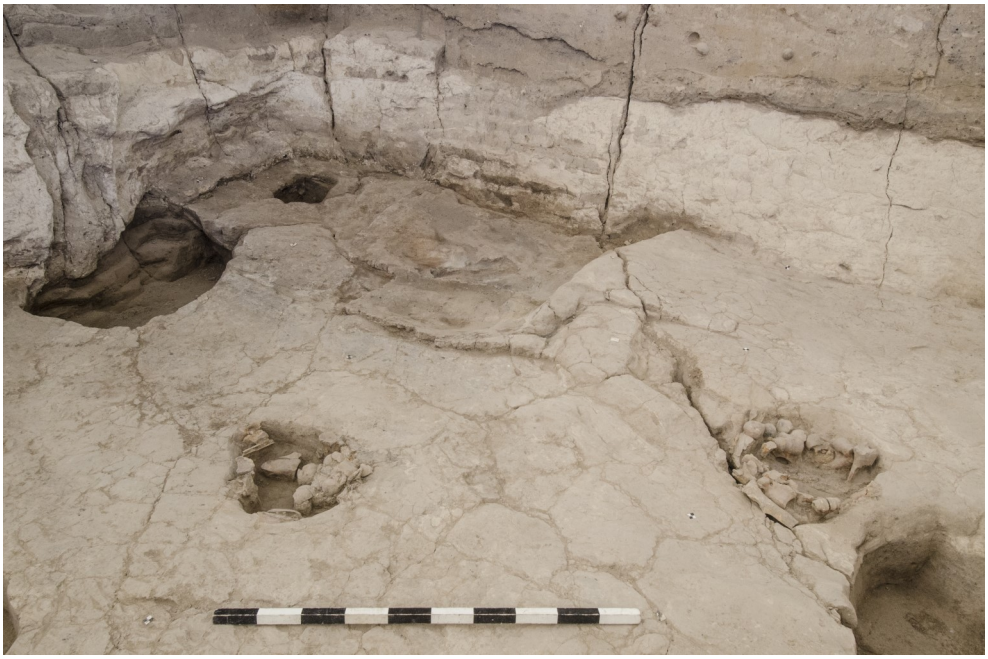


Figure 6.13. Two of four bone and clay ball pits in the final floors, Building 160. Facing southeast. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

The southern kitchen contained hearths throughout the building's occupation, but ovens only at the start and end of the sequence. The northeastern kitchen comprised an oven series in use from the start of occupation through the middle of the sequence, when the oven was demolished and a platform built over it. There may have been a span after the closure of the northeastern oven where the house lacked an oven altogether, with the southern hearth as its sole fire installation.

Burial in Building 160 occurred in the middle of the room, between these two kitchen areas. One burial was made during construction in the centre-west of the room. Two occupation-phase burials were made in the unraised centre of the room and one was situated within a platform that was built in the centre-east. These three burials are poorly situated in the stratigraphy but are certainly late in the structure's occupation: all were after construction of the north-east platform over the remains of the oven there, and any or all could have occurred just before closure of the space. The implication is that Building 160 passed through three or four different articulations of features for daily life before burial in the space began.

The northern side space of Building 160 was likely accessed through the northwest of the main space. This room initially contained some sort of pillar or tall bin against its southern wall that was dug out mid-sequence, with a cattle horncore deposited in the retrieval pit. The north wall of the space was apparently unstable, and was knocked out and rebuilt at least twice in its life (Figure 6.12). During the first such rebuild, many small clusters of artefacts were lined up below the bottom course of newly-added bricks: ceramics, groundstone, clay balls, a wooden slab, and a complete kitten. The second rebuild of the north wall had a poorly-preserved contour in the middle that may be a crawlhole to the building to the north, or else to a small outdoor activity area that intervened in the building sequence there. The crawlhole between Building 160's main space and this side space was blocked off at some point in the middle of its life. Thus, it appears that the northern side space was reassigned from Building 160 to a neighbouring space mid-way through its life—possibly bringing the total to two transient side rooms in the building's life.

At closure, four pits were dug in the central and south-central parts of Building 160's main space. These were filled with clay balls, cattle bones and worked bone tools (Figure 6.13). As I noted above, some or all of the three occupation-phase burials in the space may also have been made as a part of the closure process. After this, the posts were retrieved from along Building 160's walls, the space was demolished and rebuilt as Building 43.

6.3 Shifting ground, ca. 6500–6300 BCE.

The building sequences begun with structures like Building 17, Building 18, and the precursors to Building 160 continued to rise for generations. Ultimately, this produced a radically dense neighbourhood resembling the North Area that I explored in Chapter 5. It would be enlightening to consider the direct successors of our early-7th millennium houses through a comparative biographical approach. However, as these were largely excavated at a

coarse resolution by Mellaart in the 1960s, approaching them in the same light as I did their North Area contemporaries is impossible. In constructing a long-term history in this chapter, I will assume that the political dynamics that I identified in the North Area in the 66th century broadly characterize the mid-7th millennium across Çatalhöyük.

After the 66th century, architectural practice at Çatalhöyük transformed rapidly (Brami 2017; Farid 2013b; Marciniak 2019). This is evident in both the North and South Areas, where long-lived sequences of buildings were discontinued and midden deposits proliferated over their rubble (see §2.4.3). Some mid-7th millennium buildings were rebuilt in place, but it is likely that they did not continue far beyond this time: the rebuilds of buildings such as Building 77 and Building 131 rest just below the modern topsoil. Many other structures of the 65th and 64th centuries were built without reference to underlying architecture, or started new sequences of superimposed building on a different alignment than previous buildings. Whatever social forces had tied architecture to specific footprints for centuries previously clearly shifted at this time, allowing new forms of space-making and negotiation to emerge.

One problem for investigating this period is the limited archaeological record available. In the North Area, erosion plus post-Neolithic activities have badly truncated most buildings of the second half of the 7th millennium. This is compounded by an excavation strategy in the North Area that focused on breadth rather than depth, exposing later-7th millennium buildings to their final floors only. No matrix was available for the sole fully-excavated late-7th millennium house in the North, Building 47, which is moreover poorly connected into the site's chronology (Farid 2013b; House 2013c). In the south, although structures of the final 7th millennium have been excavated by the Poznan team (Marciniak 2019; Marciniak et al. 2015), the bridging years (from about 6500 to 6300) are represented by a few fragmentary structures plus one fully-excavated sequence of four superimposed buildings (published together in Regan and Taylor 2013). This sequence is in some ways an outlier among contemporary structures that were rarely built one-atop-the-other. It is also a challenging dataset in its own right, on temporal grounds. Although radiocarbon estimates are forthcoming, Regan and Taylor (2013, 187) suggest that the first two structures in the sequence, Buildings 65 and 56, were very short-lived structures, on the basis of their thin floors and short sequences of fire installations. The third building, Building 44, however, may have been long-lived, while the fourth, Building 10, was minimally preserved and cannot be explored biographically. There is thus uncertainty in the evidence—in the real-time durations considered, and in the representativity of Building 65-56-44-10 sequence for the larger site—that warrants caution. However, as we will see this sequence reveals suggestive changes in space-making practice when compared to earlier centuries and which resonate with the transformations underway in the broader site.

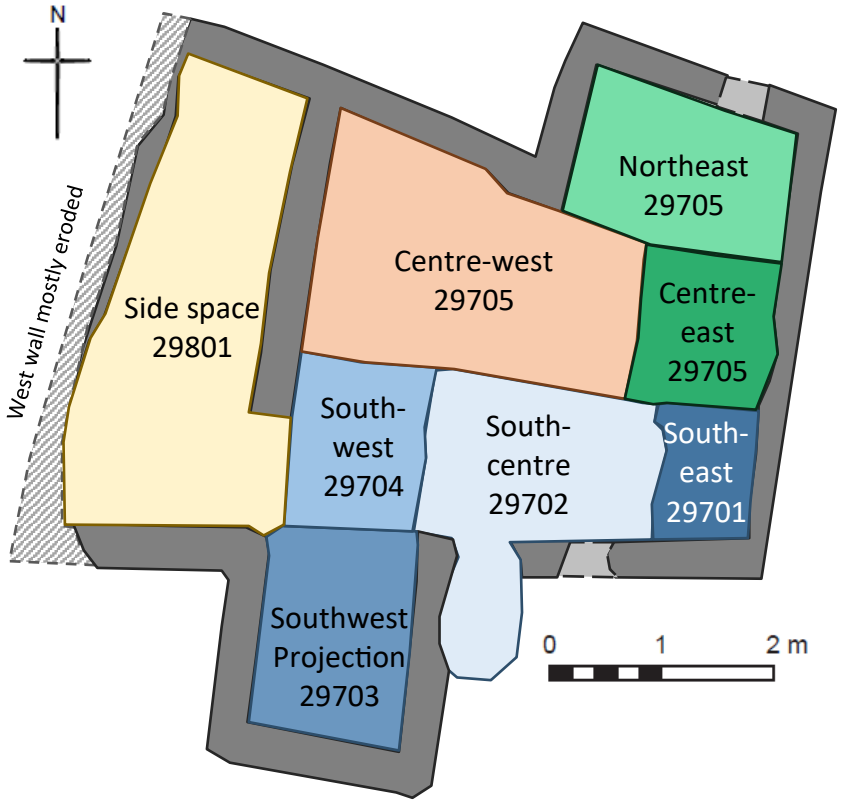


Figure 6.14. Plan of Building 65 with segments shown.

6.3.1 Building 65

Relative timeline: Appendix A.11

Building 65 is irregularly shaped, as if the builders were concerned about building long stretches of masonry on unconsolidated ground. Its southwest corner rests atop an outdoor infant burial ground that was itself set above the rubble of mid-7th millennium Buildings 79, 80, and 86. Although it may have been short-lived, several details suggest that the building was not completely ephemeral: it was adapted with crawlhole access to different parts of the surrounding midden at different times, contained a series of two hearths and ovens, and a moderate number of intercutting burials, the disturbance of which suggests time for the early burials to decay before the last ones were added.

Despite its unusual shape, Building 65 is instantly recognizable as a Catalhoyuk house: a ladder entry onto a platform in the southeast, an oven and hearth in a low kitchen area in the south-centre and a featureless southwest platform in a projection from the south wall; a side space along the west side of the building with several bins, and platforms along the north and east walls. Initially a crawlhole connected the building to the outdoor space to the north; this crawlhole was closed before the building's closure. A second crawlhole was not original to

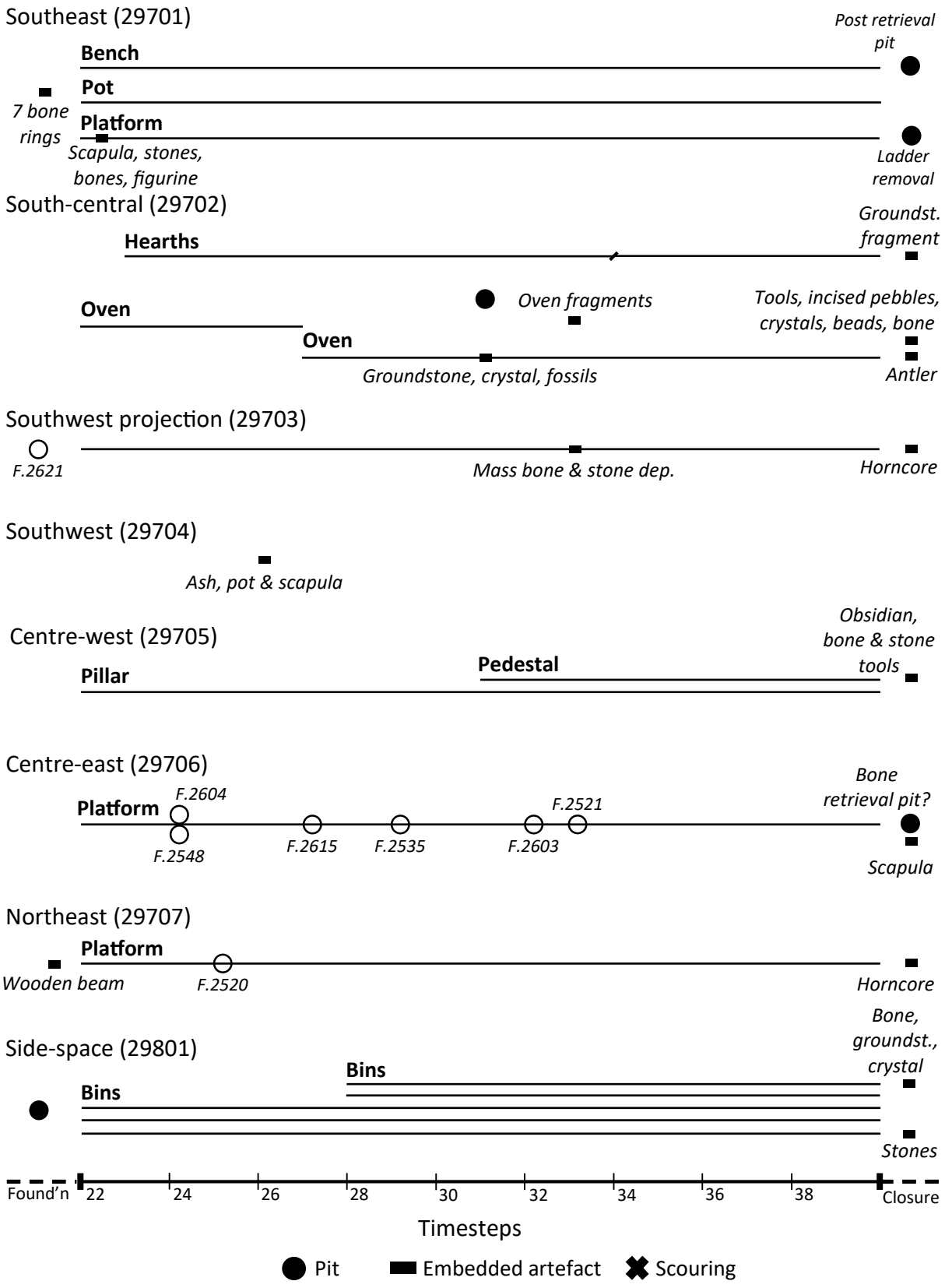


Figure 6.15. Timeline. Features in Building 65.

Figure 6.16. Pot set into southeastern platform in Building 65. Similar pottery deposits were set into the southeast platforms of successive buildings in the sequence. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

the building, but added after the wall was already plastered, and connected the building to the open area Sp.299 to the south.

The kitchen had one hearth and one oven throughout the sequence. The first oven sat entirely within the building, while the second was cut through the southern wall, its entire structure resting outside of Building 65 except for the oven's mouth. In its base were set several fossils, crystals, and groundstone fragments. A large deposit of 60+ animal bone and groundstone fragments was embedded in a raising layer for the southwest platform, likely representing a feasting deposit. Another notable deposit was in the southeast platform, under the ladder, where a whole cooking pot, a baby's leg, a cattle scapula, a stone grinder and a figurine were buried. The rim of the pot protruded from the floor, marking the deposit.

Burials in the building concentrated in the centre-east platform, where two discrete burial pits were reopened three times each to commingle the bodies buried there. People of all ages were buried here. A single infant was buried in the northeast platform.

Because of the oven protruding out into Sp.299, the southern yard can be stratigraphically tied into the in-house sequence to some extent. Here a series of firespots reveal frequent burning activities or even cooking outdoors, while ashy midden spreads reveal accumulation of cultural debris in the area. Shortly before the construction of the protruding oven, an

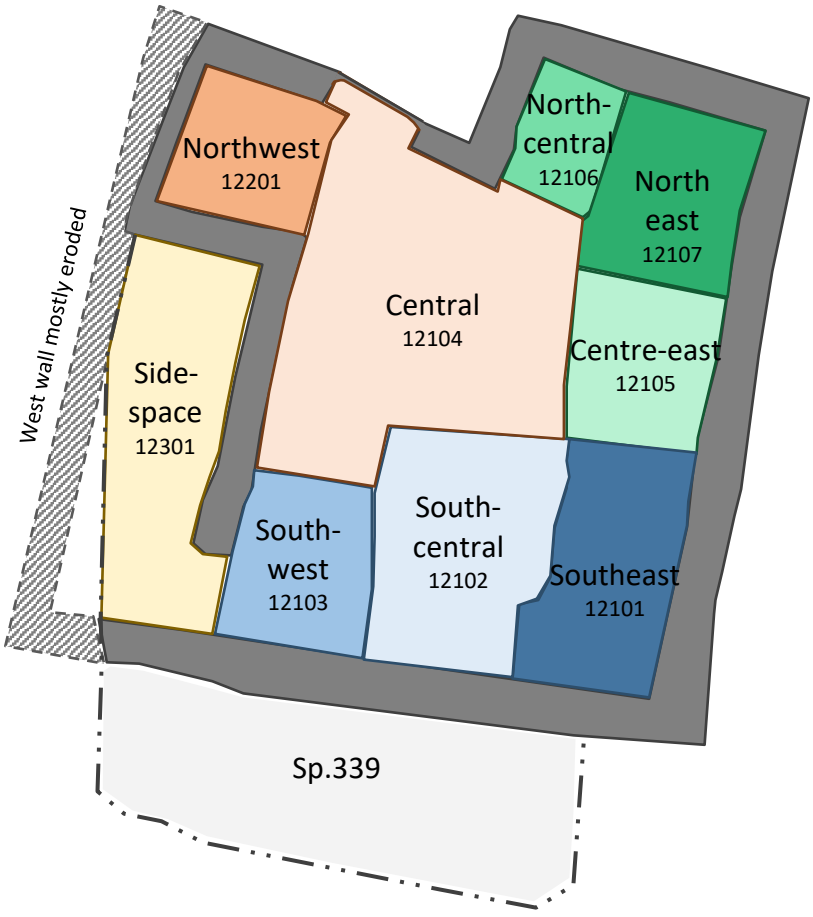


Figure 6.17. Plan of Building 56 with segments shown.

infant was left near to the southern wall of Building 65; no cut was discovered, and it appears to have been sealed within an ashy lens instead.

6.3.2 Building 56

Relative timeline: Appendix A.12

Building 56 preserved Building 65's layout in the north, but squared off in the south, which meant extending the structure out into the midden. This new southern wall was especially thick, and its foundations were buttressed with ramps of brick crush and two inset neonate bodies, suggesting a particular attention to the strength of the foundations (cf. §4.6).

Inside, its layout was similar to Building 65. Like Building 65, the kitchen comprised one hearth and one oven at any given time, with one replacement of each feature roughly in the same spot. The centre-east platform, where burials had taken place in Building 65 below, was constructed with a mudbrick cist in its core, within which was an organic bag of

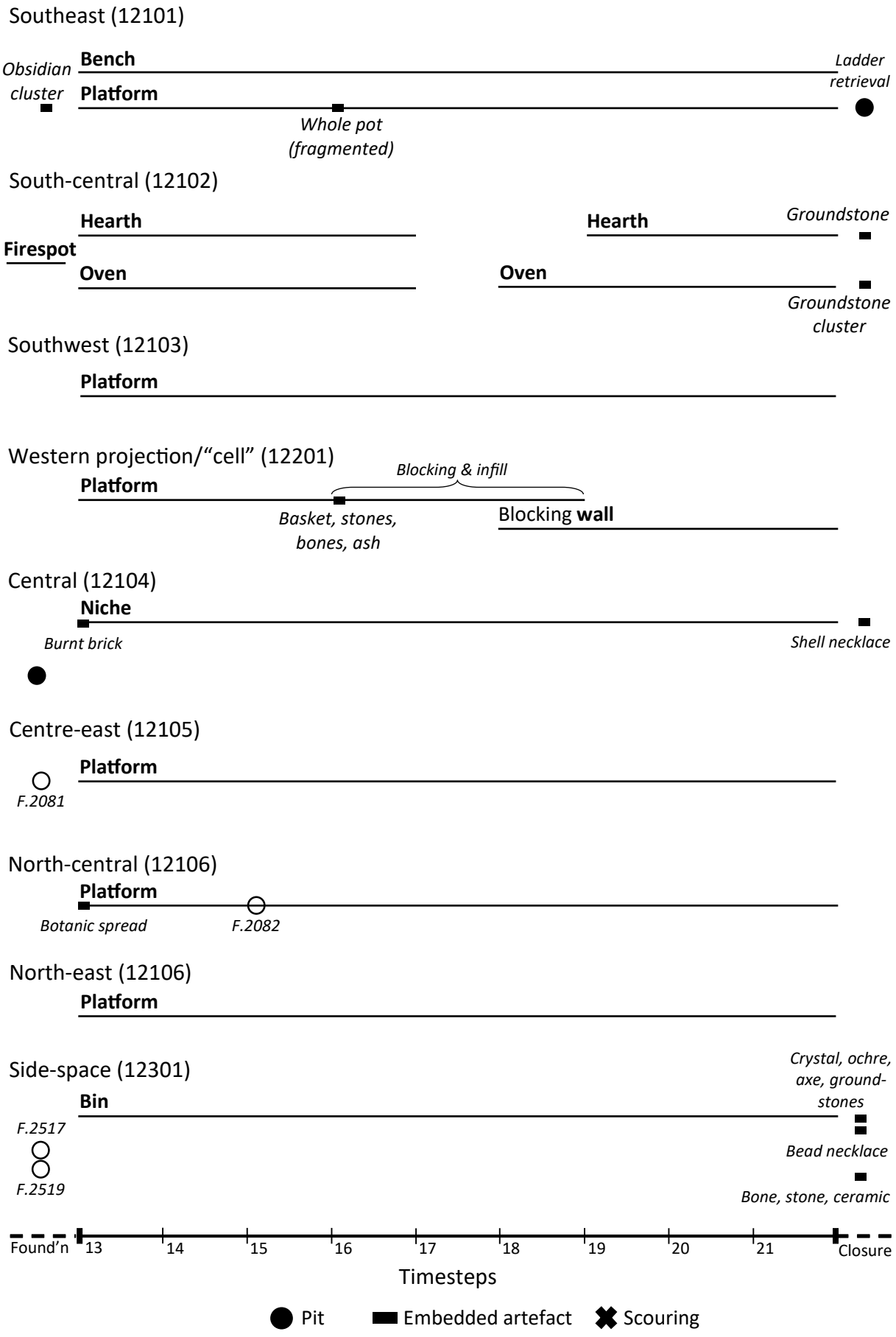


Figure 6.18. Timeline. Features in Building 56.

Figure 6.19. F.2081: two bodies (one primary delayed, one secondary) in the core of the centre-eastern platform, Building 56. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

disarticulated bones from an adult female and a ca. six year old juvenile. The only occupation-phase burial, however, an adult male, was located in a narrow north-central platform.

The side space along the west side of Building 56 did not extend all the way up the western wall; instead, a small nook protruded out from the main room in the northwest corner of the structure. This small area was filled by a platform for much of the building's life, but was walled off before closure (with a basket and a collection of stones and bones left on its final surface). Such nooks – used for a time, then filled with artefacts and closed – would be recovered in late 7th millennium structures by the TP team. The other mid-occupation depositional event was the better part of a fragmented cooking pot, sealed into the surface of the southeast entry platform (echoing the embedded pot in the building below). A range of closure deposits, including rock crystals and shell necklaces, was left on the final floors of the building at closure, especially near the northern niche/walled-off northwest platform, and in the side space.

6.3.3 Building 44

Relative timeline: Appendix A.13

Building 44's outline matched that of Building 56, and utilized some still-standing parts of the earlier building's walls, as well as the walls of the demolished, short-lived construction Building 69 to the north. However, its internal layout was somewhat different, lacking a

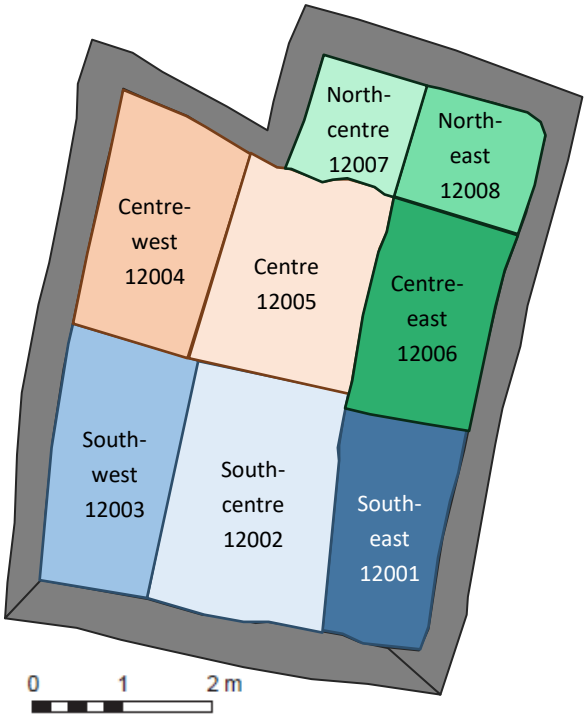


Figure 6.20. Plan of Building 44 with segments shown.

western side space or northwest 'nook'. Its wall sits at the edge of the slumped edge of Mellaart's 1965 trenches, and Regan and Taylor (2013, 186) suggest that there may have been a side space now lost to the west of the structure. They also suggest that a temporary annex may have been located above the disused footprint of Building 69 to the north, although the evidence remains ambiguous.

Without a known side space, Building 44 has a more open layout than its predecessors. The entry, bench, and platforms along the east and north wall closely follow the form of Building 56's platforms (even incorporating a cooking pot into the rim of the southeast platform); however, the western 2/3 of the space is largely open and undelineated except for a large southwest platform. This platform's mudbrick rim was actually built as a low (~55cm) wall directly atop the side space floors of Building 56, creating a cell-like structure that was filled with massive dumps of groundstone tools and large quantities of wild mustard seed capped with a wooden board, above which were a wolf's paw and a neonate. This infill was then packed with sediment and floored as a platform in the higher structure. The southwest platform was painted red repeatedly throughout the building's life.

Of the three buildings in the sequence, Building 44 had the most dynamic kitchen arrangements: its hearth was only built after the closure of its first oven, and went out of use before the end of the sequence. There are several unstructured hearths or firespots in front of the

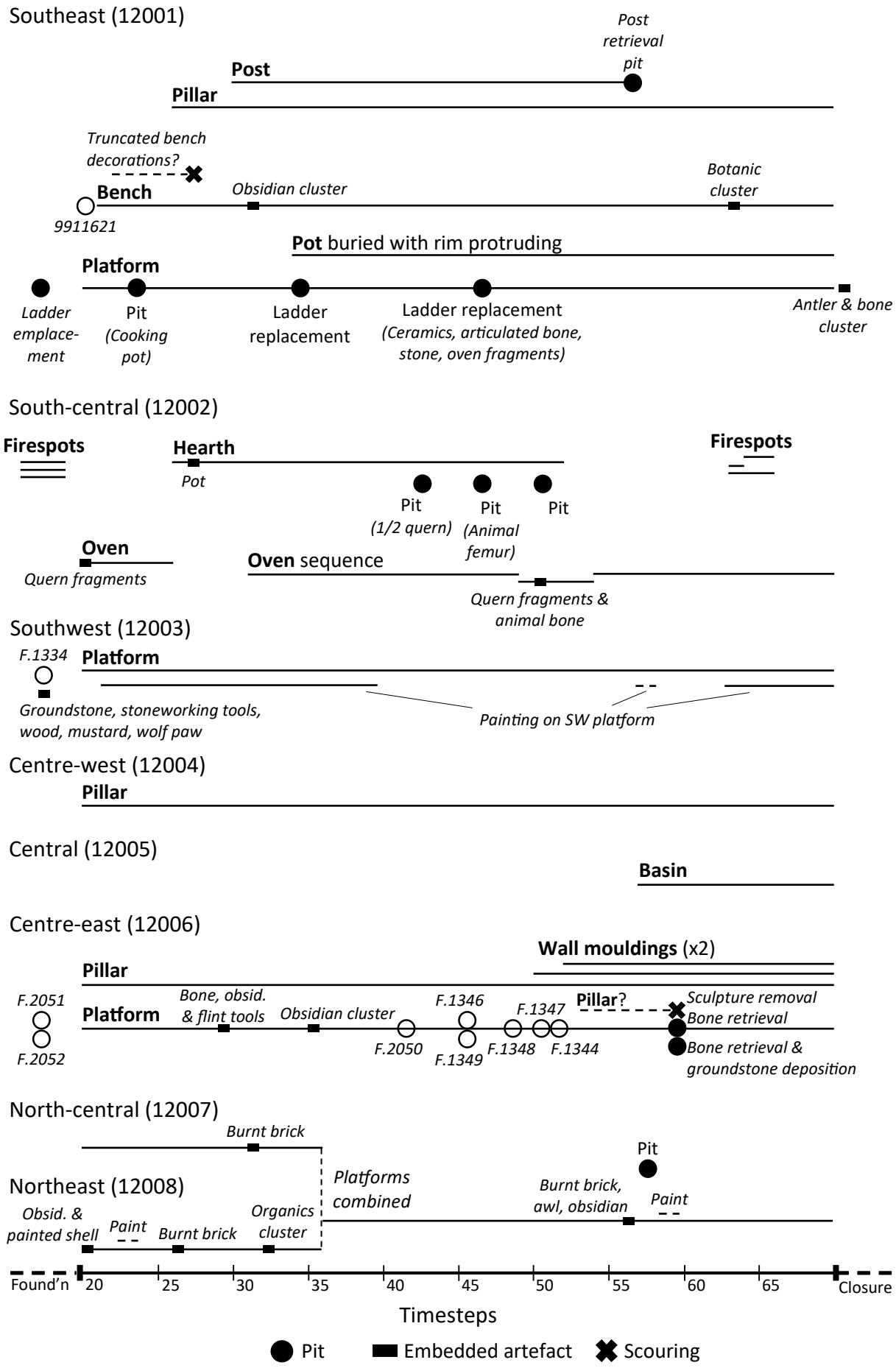


Figure 6.21. Timeline. Features in Building 44.

Figure 6.22. Horizontal moulding and second fragmentary moulding behind burial pits in the east of Building 44. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

oven after this, but notably they are all constrained by the same two floor deposits meaning they occurred within a short span of time. Several special deposits, especially focusing ceramics, botanical remains and fragmented groundstone, were made in pits and packing layers around the time of the closure of the hearth and at building closure in the kitchen area. A basin was added later in Building 44's life, unusually situated at the convergence of the three northern/eastern platforms.

Several burials, all in the centre-east platform and primarily involving adult individuals with modest grave goods, were added throughout the sequence, possibly ending some time before closure judging by the number of flooring incidents above the final burial. Burials in this platform all intercut one another, and several crania appear to have been retrieved in the process. Burial ends part-way through the sequence, but a number of pits after this (some containing collections of groundstone as well as disarticulated human bone) may reflect further reopening, bone retrieval, or potentially secondary inhumation.

The south-eastern bench had an infant cranium set into its base on the north side (next to the centre-east burial platform) during its initial construction. Scars on the bench's sides suggest that it may have had small cattle horns or large goat horns set into it at first; however, these were removed and the holes plastered over well before closure. Another scar in the flank of the centre-east platform may be a truncated decorative pillar. The southeast entry platform had a whole cooking pot deposited in it, and the rim may have protruded from the platform's surface for the remainder of the building's life, clearly citing similar pot deposits in the southeast platforms of Building 65 and 56 below.

Building 44's closure was a simple affair, without splashy artefact deposits or burials. After this, Building 10 was built above, a minimally-preserved structure representing the last known build of the Building 65-56-44-10 sequence. The building sequence thus comprises a long series of rebuilds and steady modification, although given the short estimated life-spans of Buildings 65 and 56 (and the unknown longevity of Building 10) it is possible that in real-time terms the entire sequence was much shorter than the earlier 7th millennium's superimposed building series.

6.4 History, consensus and change: politicizing surfaces & depths

An obvious starting point for investigating domestic communities as drivers of social change is to ask how Çatalhöyük houses drew together lives and materials already set out in space and articulated them in new ways. The space-making projects that made up houses, brick by brick and layer by layer, served as intersection points where human and nonhuman actors' histories were twined together. As I explored in Chapter 4, this intertwining was both material and social: space-making physically depended and drew on the remains of the past, and equally on the social commitments or consensus that features such as brick walls and deposited infant bodies helped to develop. However, as the centuries passed, the way houses drew together the past and set up possibilities for the future changed. This becomes clear as we consider the way houses were tied to the material remains of the past.

This section first considers the way construction engaged with the physical remains of past buildings. This exploration takes a broad view, expanding beyond the detailed biographies presented here to consider a wider sample of construction events as space-making. As we will see, the story is not so simple as early to mid-7th millennium continuity followed by late 7th millennium discontinuity, and has a great deal more to do with the way community life produced a range of possibilities than the way it established unambiguous conventions. The second section examines rhythms of burial, painting, sculpture and deposition in the early and later 7th millennium houses introduced in this chapter. It suggests that the very politics of surfaces that emerged in the 66th century to mark out continuity in place (i.e., old houses: §5.6) also helped construct histories that were adaptable to short-lived and materially diverse spaces, without undercutting a general site-wide emphasis on history-making. Taken together, these sections suggest that specific ways of recruiting buildings, bodies and artefacts into social projects helped shape the tenor of change at a larger scale as the town at Çatalhöyük developed across the centuries.

6.4.1 Construction as social action

What kind of historical set-up—past performances, past houses and past lives—went into producing a viable space with a workable social consensus to support it? I examined this process in detail in Chapter 4, following dead bodies, old walls, wooden posts, bricks and mortar as these came together to construct Building 131. There, I argued that this short-term action involved a wide range of people, alive and dead, in building a shared consensus around the house: a sense that it 'fit' in the social fabric of the tell, and a range of stakeholders invested in keeping it there (§4.6; cf. Hodder 2012, chap.6). This dual aspect of history-making—recruiting the past to shape the present, in order to project the present into the future—could be achieved through a wide variety of performances. Although many history-making architectural practices resonated throughout the Middle East in the Neolithic (Hodder 2018), the way that Building 131's construction fitted it into a history-rich social landscape was particular to its place and time, and articulated it as a particular kind of participant in Çatalhöyük communities. By examining the way houses were built and closed at different points in the 7th millennium, we can see significant changes in the political roles houses played.

The relative timelines presented in this thesis include a vast scope of information about the way construction, demolition, and other structural activities worked as social projects (§4.6), and each building contains thought-provoking idiosyncrasies—underlying walls uprooted (Building 131), outdoor cemeteries in the months or years leading up to construction (Buildings 17, 65, 77), and old structures protruding through floors and repurposed as plastered ledges (Building 59). There are material details that only detailed specialist analysis will tease out (Barański et al. 2015; Love 2013; Tung 2013c). A fuller consideration could fill a book of its own (e.g. Brami 2017). However, here I focus on a simpler question: in what ways did house-builders work with, or ignore, the walls of earlier houses in the construction of new ones? This cuts to the core of questions of social memory, the institutionalization of houses, and the politics of knowledge of the past as these shaped the tell through social projects. It is also straightforward enough to answer even with partially-excavated or fragmentarily-preserved buildings, allowing the picture to expand beyond the limited sample of buildings for which we have full biographical detail.

Figure 6.23 shows the relationships between 27 Çatalhöyük houses and the buildings above and below them pictorially. It includes all eleven buildings presented in full biography in Chapters 4-6, as well as a non-exhaustive but broadly representative sample of additional houses in order to capture a fuller view. For reasons of space, buildings are not arranged in strict chronological order but are grouped by area and period. Due to the difference in

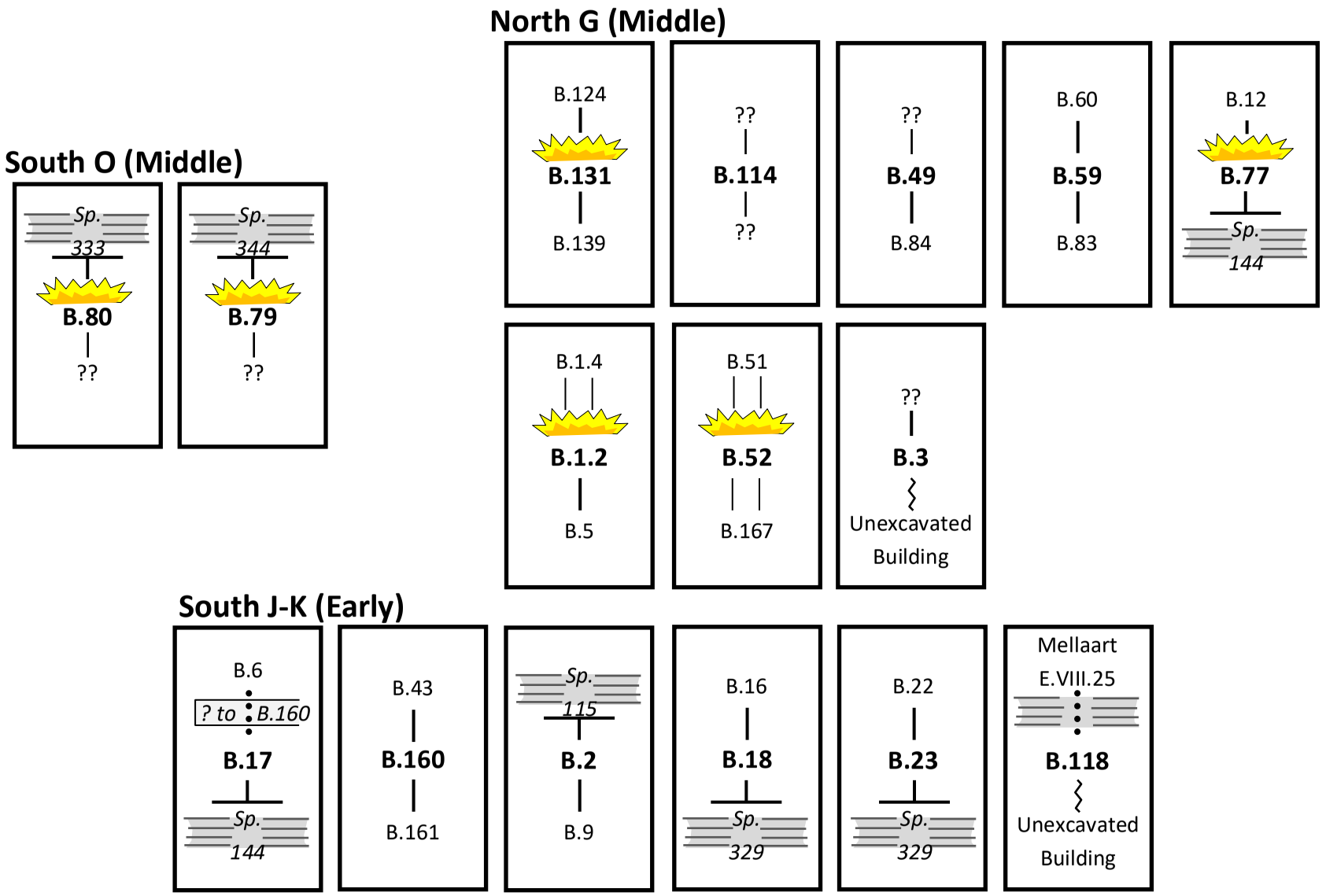


Figure 6.23. *continues on next page; see key on page 240.*

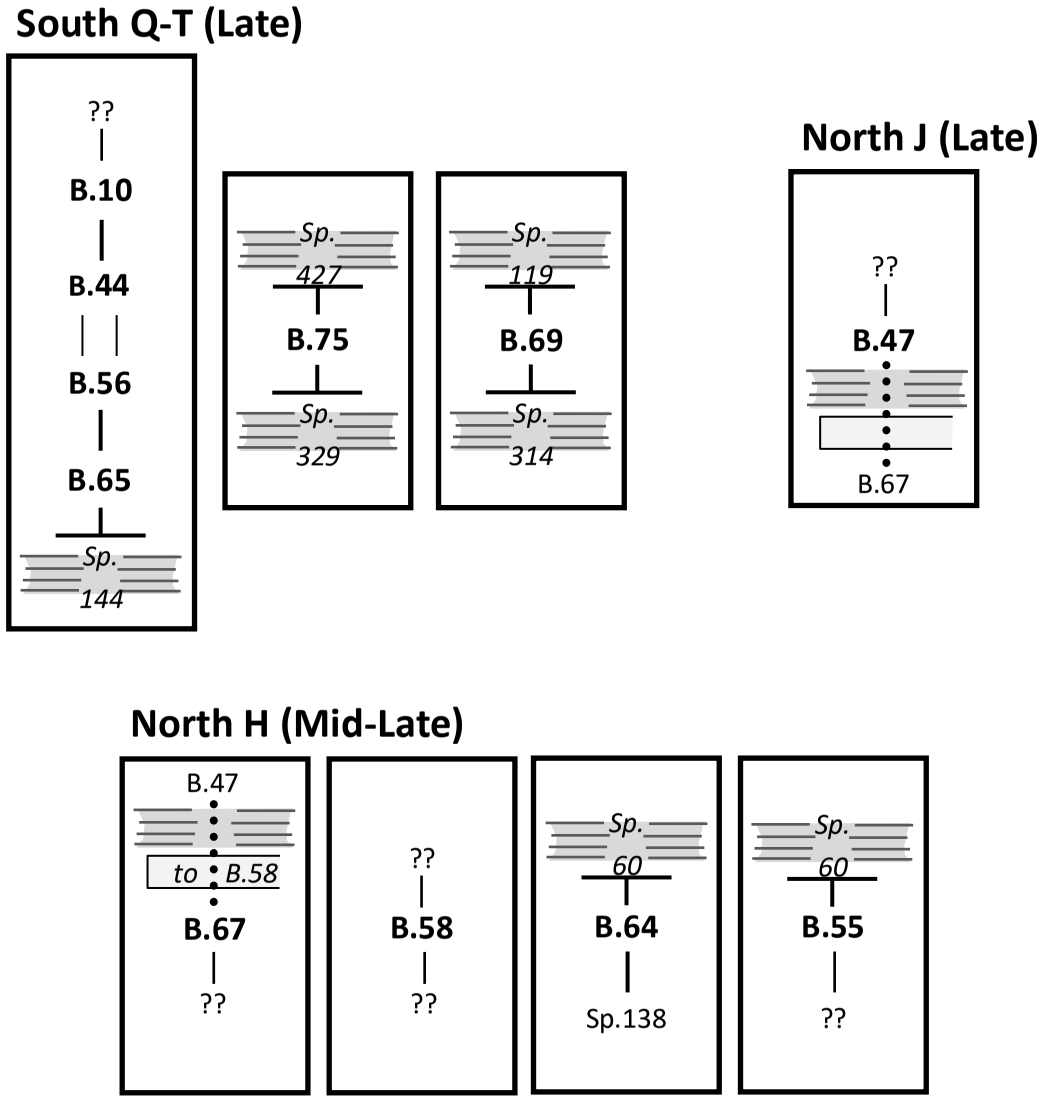
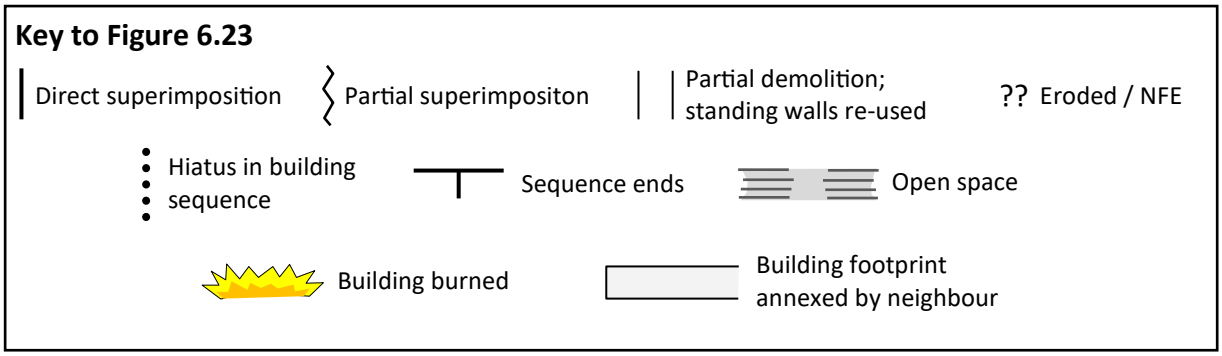


Figure 6.23. *(continuing from previous page)* The structural links between 27 Çatalhöyük houses and buildings above and below them. See key on next page.



excavation methods and recording, I have not focused on buildings excavated in the 1960s. However, where buildings excavated by the Hodder project lie directly below areas excavated in the 1960s, I have incorporated the Mellaart buildings with the best current understanding of the relationships between them and their recently-excavated predecessors.

The overall historical trajectory that has been discussed since the 1960s (Hodder 2014a; Mellaart 1967) is visible in Figure 6.23. The earliest buildings sit atop open spaces, and begin long series of superimposed structures that stretch into the mid-7th millennium. The mid-7th millennium sees a number of buildings burnt; shortly after this, many buildings are abandoned and turned to open space. And the later 7th millennium sees some strands of superimposed buildings amid other shifting, one-off structures. However, focusing in on individual buildings at a slightly finer grain yields challenging observations. For example, although most buildings in the early-mid 7th millenniums appear, at a glance, to be part of *continuous* sequences of building and rebuilding, a closer examination reveals many salient *discontinuities.* Buildings 17 and 118 in the early 7th millennium and Building 67 around or shortly after the mid-7th millennium were all rebuilt with structures sitting directly atop them—but only after a hiatus where their footprint was repurposed as open space or potentially as a storage annex. Buildings created by half-demolishing an old building and using a mix of old and new walls (Buildings 1.4, 51, and 44) appears rarely but regularly in the mid- to late-7th millennium. To these observations, we could add the frequency with which side spaces appear to be closed partway through buildings' biographies (Buildings 3, 49, 114, 160) or even reassigned from one building to another (Building 160; cf Barański et al. 2015).

These cases help to qualify the social dynamics of history making at Çatalhöyük, especially in the early- to mid-7th millennium. In particular, we can add two less-acknowledged dynamics to this period. (1) A closer look at the time in-between buildings reveals that building sequences, even long-lived and elaborate ones, may be less continuous than they appear at a glance. Long-lived and busy structures like Buildings 2, 17, and 132 (below Building 77) could be abandoned, their inhabitants relocated and their footprint converted to

other uses. However, (2) multiple forces pointed space-making back to buried structures, so that an *ex post facto* architectural tidiness emerged out of in-the-moment social flexibility. Later building projects re-engaged the walls of structures abandoned years or generations earlier and even replicated or referenced buried details of their internal layouts and features, despite alternative social arrangements having prevailed in the meantime. These paired dynamics of short-term flexibility and long-term tendency to return challenge claims about the role of superimposed building sequences as long-lasting institutions along the line of Lévi-Strauss's 'house societies', as in the 'history house' hypothesis (Hodder and Pels 2010). The inhabitants of Çatalhöyük houses were clearly not bound to single structures nor obliged to replicate the patterns of relationships and collaborations that a house materialized over the long-term. Both daily living arrangements and knowledge of the buried past must have been managed within social networks considerably larger than single structures, and specific locations' histories were appealed to selectively rather than constantly. As Tringham (2000, 127) states, when we zoom in on spatial histories in small areas, the tell at Çatalhöyük looks 'not like a layer cake, but an anthill', freely improvised. And yet, when we zoom out, it *does* look a little like a layer cake (e.g. Figure 2.11), and this is also crucial information. Pasts associated with precisely-located, buried materials retained a force that tended, sooner or later, to be activated in further social projects. The *politics of depths* that caused artefacts, features, and entire houses to be buried within the rising tell—but remembered, referenced and recruited into later space-making projects directly above them—meant that short-term discontinuities in inhabitation did not erase spaces' qualities, associations, or spatiality. The end result looks rather neater than the process that produced it.

Understanding the nature of earlier superimposed construction also helps to clarify what changed in the mid- to late 7th millennium, when few buildings were located carefully atop older structures. Architectural discontinuity—often cast as evidence of disruption of the previous social order (e.g. Düring 2011, 132; Hodder 2014a, 11)—no longer appears idiosyncratic to this period. Nor is it simply that that later 7th millennium people struggled to sustain long-standing social and spatial patterns faltered. They began actively making space in ways that were never done before, and left aside architectural potentials from earlier years that remained feasible. In particular, the ability to activate old structures to build new ones, even across gaps in inhabitation, was apparently no longer practiced in this time. Earlier 7th millennium construction projects often re-engaged the remains and memory of houses that had been out of use for a time. In the later 7th millennium, not so: the Building 65-56-44-10 sequence consists entirely of immediate (and likely rapid) rebuilds, and buildings of the period that were demolished and not immediately rebuilt were, with one possible exception (Building 67) simply never built atop again. While superimposed construction remained

potentially salient, then, that potential may have been lost as soon as a building or building sequence was truly abandoned.

New ways of building the necessary social consensus to establish and sustain a house emerged in the later 7th millennium, with a different material relationship to the past. These observations converge with studies suggesting that collaborative networks drawn on for tasks shrank in the later 7th millennium (§6.5; Marciniak et al. 2015b). If discontinuities in previous centuries were 'smoothed over' because houses were engaged in expansive, multilateral communities—a sort of 'safety net' in which a building sequence's social salience was sustained, even if it was abandoned for a while—houses bound up in less extensive communities may simply have been more 'forgettable'. On the other hand, new kinds of social projects clearly emerged in the later 7th millennium. Space-making activities, particularly in building construction, could still be set atop recently-demolished structures; but it became more thinkable to build anew in places without deep, physical roots. The results of this shift on the larger shape of the tell are clear: a sparser, slower-rising and gradually dispersing town, where discontinuities and improvisation show through without much after-the-fact erasure, and where houses were fitted to already-inhabited space in new ways and with shorter temporal horizons.

6.4.2 Burial, painting, sculpture and deposition

As houses were occupied, a range of activities further defined their social qualities through gatherings, performances, and material transformations to the house that were made in the process. We saw in Chapter 5 how such activities could fundamentally refigure the kind of place a house was even as it was actively involved in daily lives and economies. Mid-7th millennium houses modulated between 'younger' patterns where artefacts and bodies were embedded within floors and walls, and where visual elaboration tended to be in the form of short-lived paintings; and 'older' patterns where buildings gradually accumulated lasting visible markers of past events like sculptures and feasting trophies, with a slight concomitant tendency for burial and artefact embedding to become more rare. How did this pattern relate to the ways in which space-making worked with the past through the rapidly-rising first half of the 7th millennium, when structures sat atop older structures? Did it contribute to or even prefigure a new way of reckoning the past that was less tied to buried things, as suggested by construction projects in the later 7th millennium? By examining burial, painting, sculpture and artefact deposition in the six further biographies in this chapter, we can begin to get a sense for the way materializing the past shaped the futures that community life pointed toward over the course of the 7th millennium.

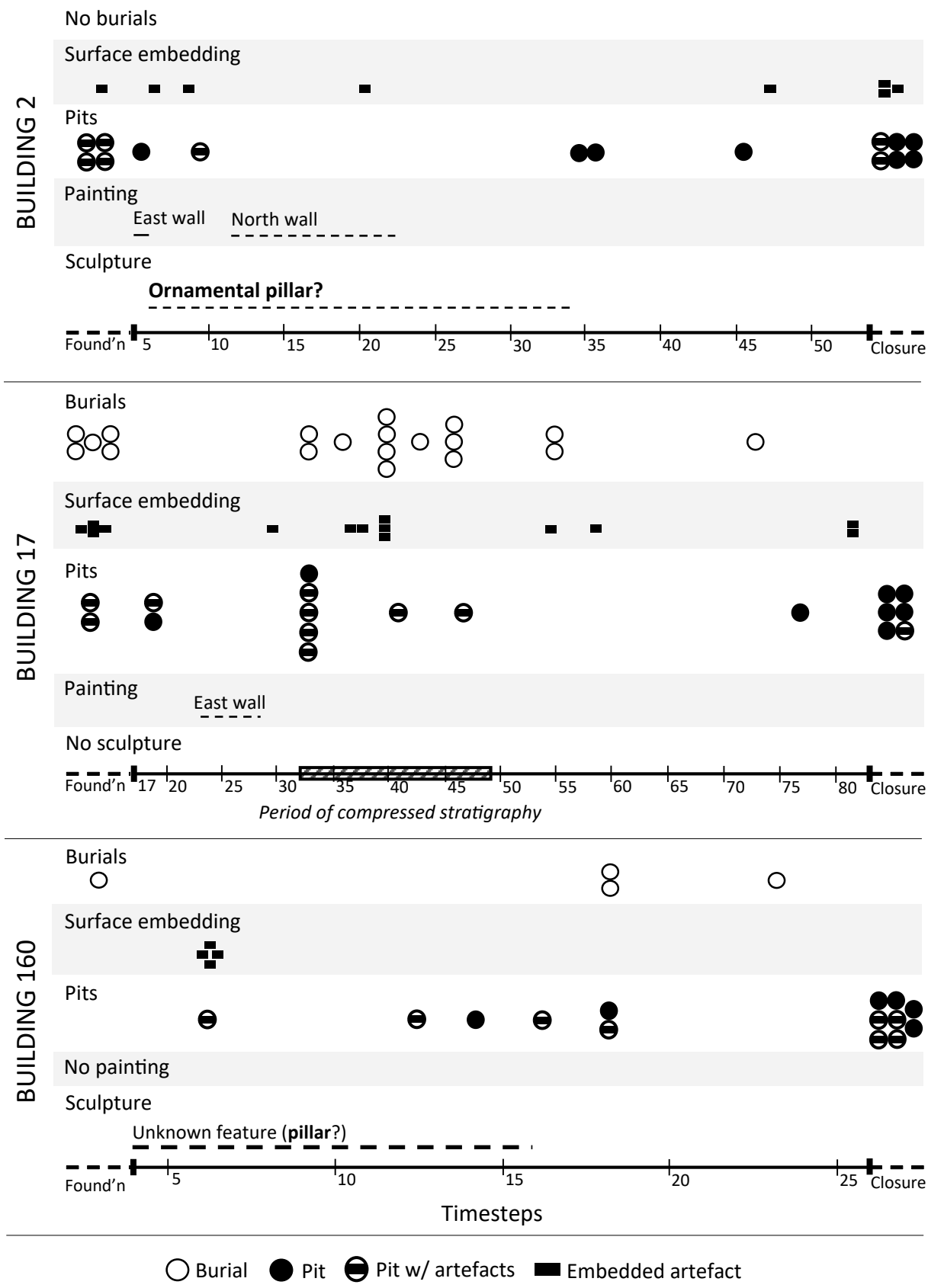


Figure 6.24. Burial, embedding, digging and display practices in early buildings' biographies.

Figures 6.24 and 6.25 show the four feature types in question through the biographies of the early and later 7th millennium house biographies in this chapter, respectively. It is clear at a glance that the space-making repertoire at Çatalhöyük was present throughout the sequence. Every period saw intramural burials, sculpted plaster elements, artefact deposition and painting. On the other hand, these appear in changing combinations revealing substantial changes in the way such activities gave shape to communities.

The early 7th millennium houses here have rich records of artefact deposition, small amounts of painting, and two of the three houses contain intramural burials. The most striking difference in these houses is the absence of sculpted elements, of which the few suggested examples (truncated post-based features in Buildings 2 and 160) are uncertain in nature. This is broadly consistent with Mellaart's (1967) broader but coarser investigation of these centuries: although he does report wall sculptures in some 'shrines' of the period, they are in general less elaborate and perhaps more doubtful in their reconstruction than mid-7th millennium surface adornments. Instead, these houses see rich records of interventions into the subsurface, often small-scale and idiosyncratic (a child's tooth embedded in wall plaster in Building 17; a possible cat pelt buried in Building 2's southwest area) though occasionally grander (the large aggregations of artefacts and baby animals buried below Building 17's eastern wall and Building 160's rebuilt northern wall). In most cases, both burials and artefact deposits are one-offs, with limited evidence for retrieval or intercutting of graves/ pits. But, particularly in Building 17, there are remarkable demonstrations of very specific memory of prior depositional action. In the southeast corner of Building 17, two very similar anthropomorphic figurines were deposited within flooring layers around the house, most likely several years apart. The burial of an older female with a strand of unfinished faux deer canine beads in an unusual location in the southwest was echoed many years later—after a potential hiatus in the building sequence—by a child's grave bearing the same kinds of beads at virtually identical X/Y coordinates, and likewise the retrieval and relocation of a cranium at Building 17's closure placed one retrieved cranium directly below the spot where a later cranium-retrieval burial would be sited in Building 6 (Farid 2005b, 274–275). Altogether, the impression is of a flourishing politics of depth, in which many interventions disappeared into the subsurface never to be seen again, but in which deposits, graves and indeed entire infilled houses (previous section) were carefully remembered and informed space with precisely-located historical characteristics.

After the mid-7th millennium peak in visual elaboration (Hodder and Pels 2010), the later 7th millennium presents a complex picture of continuity and transformation. On the one hand, many individual space-making acts in the three buildings examined above would not look out of place in mid-7th millennium houses, or even earlier ones. A pit near an oven with a

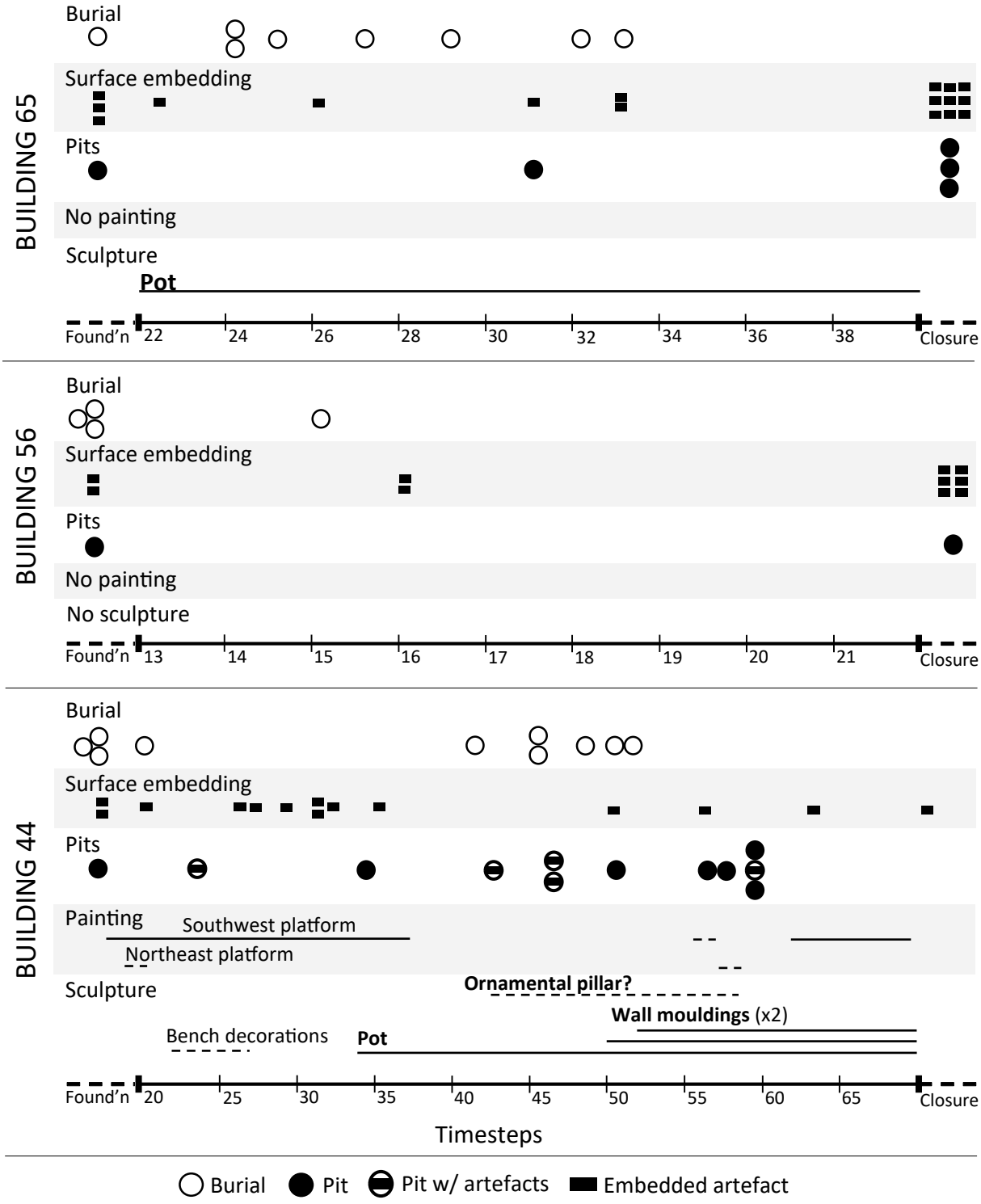


Figure 6.25. Burial, embedding, digging and display practices in late buildings' biographies.

large quern fragment in it; a collection of rocks, bones and fossils in an oven base; an infant cranium set into the base of a bench: there was clearly a continued social currency to depositional action, revealing an ongoing politics of depth whereby converting surface matter into subsurface deposits constructed social consensus around a place. On the other hand, there are clear innovations in the set of practices present in Buildings 65, 56, and 44.

The series of ceramic finds in the southeast, entry areas of the three buildings were generally deposited so as to remain visible for an extended time, e.g. by letting their rims protrude through the floors or by fragmenting them and embedding the sherds in the rim of the entry platform. The northwest platform in Building 56, which was walled off and filled with artefacts, and the southwest platform of Building 44, which was built atop the floors of Building 56 as a low containing wall and then filled with artefacts and an infant body, defined a clear spatial focus for massive deposits, a practice that would continue into the final centuries of the 7th millennium (e.g. Marciniak et al. 2017, 89) and perhaps even be adapted into the practice of creating devoted burial rooms or buildings in later years (Marciniak et al. 2015a). Other later 7th millennium buildings show even greater departure from earlier patterns of deposition and display. The most striking feature in Building 57 in the North Area was a large, geometrically-incised 'crown' on its oven, an otherwise unparalleled feature at the site (Sadarangani 2013). Building 47 contained a single platform made of mud bricks laid flat on the ground, and between adjacent rows of bricks (likely reflecting an expansion of the platform) artefacts could be inserted and plastered into the feature (House 2013c). Mellaart's most elaborately painted buildings also date to this period (Mellaart 1967), although without similar finds recovered using more modern methods these paintings are difficult to assess. Although 'depth-oriented' activities remained important throughout the 7th millennium, and none of the later-7th millennium houses are as visually striking as the 66th century buildings in Chapter 5, the impression is of a more idiosyncratic and innovative approach to history-making with sculpture, incision, and strategies for making subsurface deposits visible at the surface.

None of the early or later 7th millennium houses investigated in this chapter underwent a clear transition from a more depth- to surface-oriented politics over the course of its occupation, such as we saw in 66th century buildings in Chapter 5. Visual elaborations of the three early buildings here were all early-life features (and were few at that); there is little evidence for the concentration of burial activity or deposition in earlier or later strata (especially considering that the rush of burials in the middle of Building 17's biography is likely an artefact of preservation conditions: see §6.2.2). Although two wall mouldings were indeed added to the walls of Building 44 shortly before the final burials there, other visual elaborations of the building prevailed earlier in its biography (most notably a pair of suspected horns on the bench flank, that were later removed). Neither Building 65 nor 56 sees much visual change at all, which is unsurprising given that these two buildings were likely short-lived. Although evidence from other buildings is fragmentary, there are no clear examples from either the early or later 7 millennium where a flush of lasting visual elaboration was added near to the end of a house's biography.

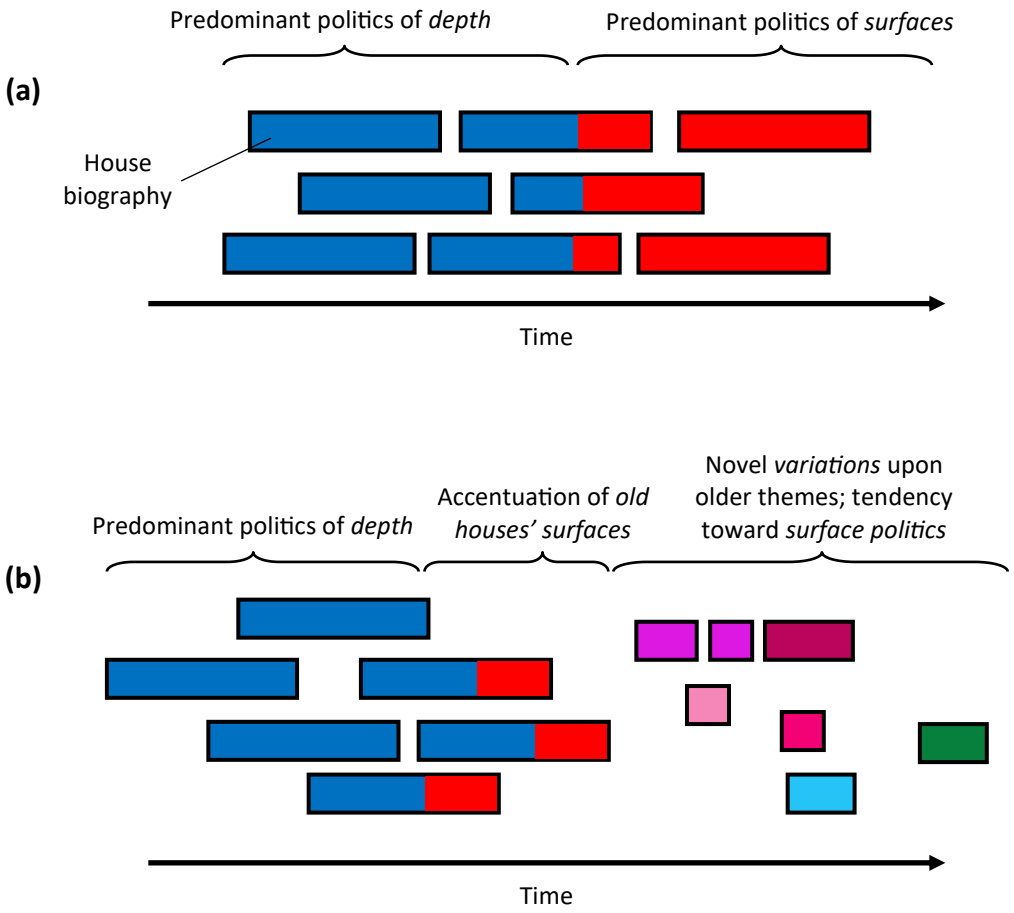


Figure 6.26. Two models of historical change between *depth-oriented* and *surface-oriented* space-making. (a) Hypothetical scenario, in which some houses are transitional between two clear alternatives. (b) Scenario suggested for Çatalhöyük, in which the mid-7th millennium sees a unique politics of surfaces that opens up other, later possibilities.

These observations trace a trajectory of change through the 7th millennium that was driven by the way performances and displays assembled communities. As I discussed in Chapter 5, there are different ways we can understand regular transitions in houses' biographies like the shift in emphasis from depths to surfaces in 66th century houses. We could consider, for example, that mid-7th millennium houses were simply caught in-between two distinct historical periods, with their tail in one way of making space and their head in a new one. This hypothetical reading of the sequence is visualized in Figure 6.26a. But the examination here suggests something more complex: the mid-7th millennium fixation on old structures did not directly establish a new normal, but rather represented a short-lived dynamic over perhaps a few generations. At the time, visually distinguishing old structures may have fitted well with long-established values surrounding historical rootedness, (human) old age (Meskell 2008; Nakamura and Meskell 2009; Pearson and Meskell 2015) and depth. But it opened the door to new ways of gathering people together and building a social consensus with very different material implications. In the long term, these developed in a wide variety

of ways (Figure 6.26b), creating a more diverse range of practices in later centuries that varied from one part of the site to another.

6.4.3 Fitting places to the past and future

Making and manipulating built space at Çatalhöyük was always a process of history-making. Buildings were not erected at random, and the decision to bury a particular person in a particular way or to set horns or bones from a feast into space always worked within already-established spatial relationships in order to project new qualities forward in time. By looking at the way construction activities, deposition and display changed through time, we can start to understand changing dimensions of material politics as these shaped communities and lives in the past.

The data above help us to frame different ways of constructing communities out of living and dead bodies, mudbricks, pigments and artefacts. We are invited to reappraise the remarkable vertical growth of the tell in the early 7th millennium, less as an obligatory institutional demand or one-dimensional social value ('the more continuity, the more prestige'), and more as an outgrowth of specific ways of knowing and engaging space in broader communities. With few enduring visible clues to the range of buried matter in a place and rapid changes in the involvement of each house in daily life (§6.5), the knowledge of the subsurface demonstrated in this time relied on *translations*—memories, stories, personal relationships—shared among social networks bigger than any one building. It is not hard to imagine a human politics that privileged old age (Meskell 2008; Nakamura and Meskell 2009; Pearson and Meskell 2015) and that gave the people present to witness funerals, deposition and the like a special ability to shape future collaborations and consensus. But equally, the very materiality of burying, plastering, building one house atop the other constructed a shared experience around the site of a meaningful (and structurally important) world below people's feet. All of those translations were tied to walls, bodies, and artefacts set in quite specific spots in the town. It was in this light that short-term shifts that moved people around the site and brought houses into and out of use could be 'smoothed over' in the long run, with tidy superimposition of houses and many remarkable demonstrations of memory stitching the tell together.

The mid-7th millennium saw an outgrowth of this politics of memory that directed performances, and their commemoration, into long-standing structures. In conceptual terms, directing feasting trophies and sculptural activity into particularly long-lived structures was likely not a great departure from what came before. However, this practice set in motion a

tension between surfaces and depths: the material that marked out old houses as special kinds of place in the town's geography acted by remaining insistent, rather than becoming anchored in the subsurface of the tell. Building a new house atop the walls of an old one only works if there is an old building to build atop; along lines like these, a politics of depth ties space making steadily though flexibly back to specific places. A politics of surfaces, perhaps counterintuitively, is transposable to a wider range of spaces with greater or lesser reference to what lies below them. Although it remains possible that there *was* social upheaval in the mid-7th millennium tied to population pressure, changing economic or ecological conditions, or similar, it is also clear that the period opened up new ways of drawing together people, things, and places to make communities—ways that allowed the tell to transform dramatically in the centuries that followed.

The larger point of all this is that the way performance and memory were articulated within houses clearly resonated through patterns in the larger built environment of the tell. Any one burial, feast, or painting at the site responded to localized concerns and the circumstances of the specific people involved. But despite their diversity, material projects at any point in time had common premises and tendencies that helped channel emergent social change in some directions and not others. Daily life, intimate spaces and specific social projects did not exist on a separate social plane to long-term history and large-scale social structural change. In many ways, the former were the many tiny engines of the latter. Whether by propelling the gradual emergence of a stacked-up tell with wall atop wall and burial cutting burial, or setting in motion a new way of living with short-lived, one-off houses and diverse, idiosyncratic gatherings and displays, as people articulated their lives with others' and collaborated with bricks, bones and plasters they set about changing their world.

6.5 Metabolism, daily practice and built landscapes

Although houses' roles as social actors and collaborators in change comes through clearly in intensive moments of construction and closure, death and display, their roles in daily practices and dependencies were equally transformative. This section draws on analytic tools developed in previous chapters to trace tempos of change; metabolic features like hearths and bins; and the standardization or diversity of buildings' layouts. These reflect different ways of reworking space in the process of reformulating communities: the expansion and contraction of different *material political dimensions* of Çatalhöyük society (§4.5). As I will show, at no point did Çatalhöyük communities enter a stable state, with each generation seamlessly replacing the last. Rather, as bodies and walls, ovens and harvests came together, collaborated and passed away (or were buried), the communities they formed set up a

different future than they began with, opening up some futures and closing off others. The material politics of houses thus emerged out of, and gave qualities and direction to, the most intimate contexts in Neolithic life.

6.5.1 Stabilizing space: tempos of change

Chapters 4 and 5 established that 66th century buildings had bifurcated tempos of change: buildings were mostly modified through steady tweaking of features, but every building was subjected to one to three more substantial overhauls affecting several roles at once. Often these major transitions had a clear focal area within the house, and in addition to reshaping the way that area was furnished for engagement in practice, transitions reshaped the way people moved into and around the focal area. I argued that this way of working with space was well-suited to a society where buildings were involved in disunified and raggedly-coordinated sets of communities (§5.4). An interesting question is whether major transitions like this were peculiar to that historical moment, or whether other periods of the site's history saw space modified in similar ways.

Figure 6.27 presents the overall tempos of change for the six early- and later 7th millennium buildings introduced above, along with the mid-7th millennium tempo graphs from previous chapters. It suggests a subtle shift later in the 7th millennium. Early- and mid-7th millennium buildings fit the same pattern, of predominantly piecemeal modification with a few moments of more major reconfiguration. Throughout the first half of the 7th millennium, then, we can imagine communities that shifted steadily, but intermittently 'snapped' into new configurations by reformulating space in a more extensive way.

By contrast, the three later 7th millennium buildings considered here contain fewer major transitions. One reason for this may be a different kind of tempo: the rate at which buildings were demolished and rebuilt. All else being equal, if later 7th millennium buildings were occupied on a scale of years rather than the decades-long lifespans of earlier buildings (§6.4.1), we would expect the kinds of circumstances that drove major renovations to arise fewer times over their use-lives. There is an undeniable logic to this. And yet, the one major transition that *is* evident in these buildings comes in the middle of the Building 56 sequence, potentially the shortest-lived of the three based on its lack of an extended burial sequence and few floor layers. This captures the moment when the northwestern platform was walled off and filled with artefacts and sediment and, around the same time, the fire installations to the south were replaced with new features incorporating substantial deposits of artefacts in the construction process. Even in short-lived buildings, then, social projects could draw

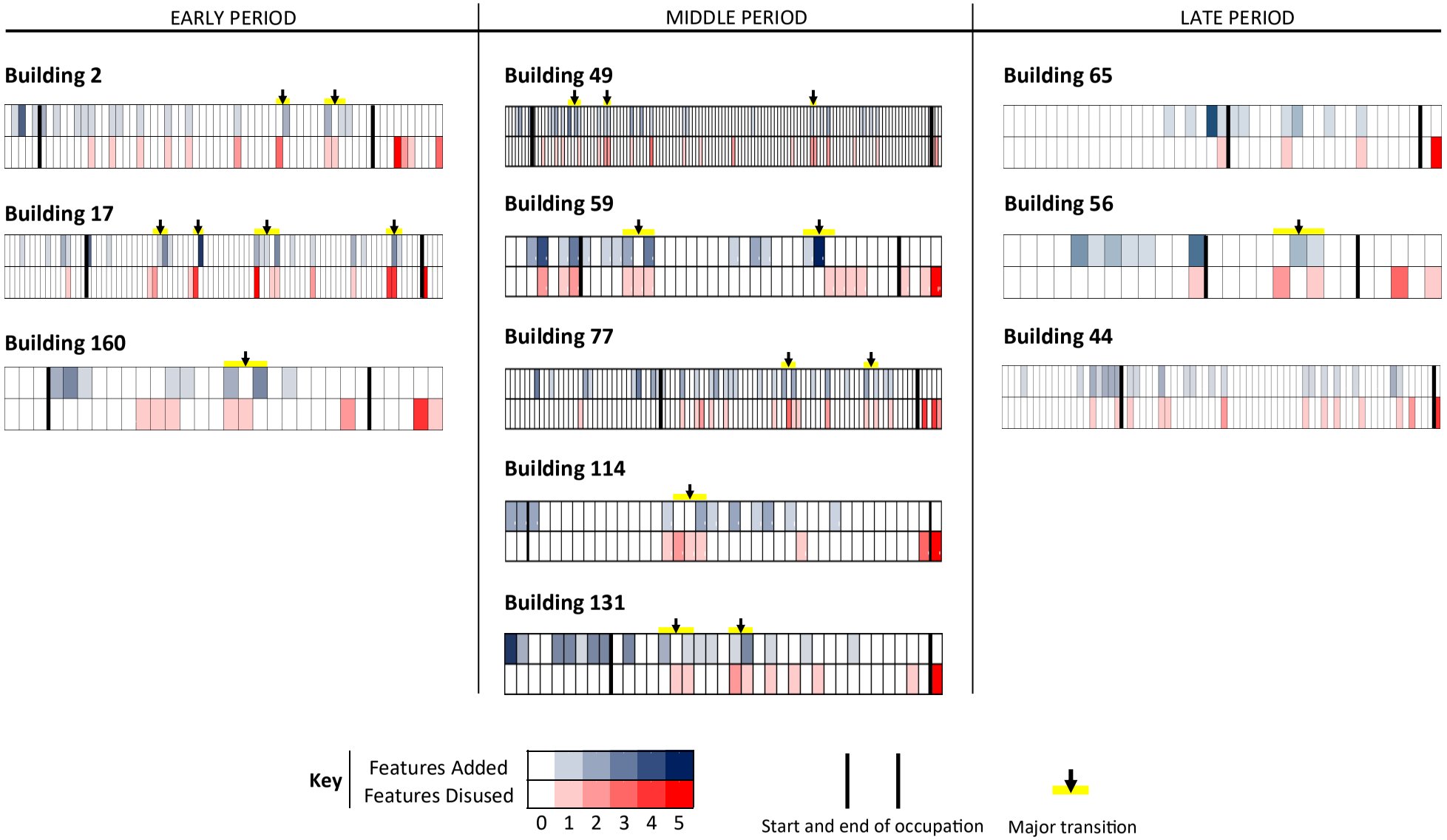


Figure 6.27. Tempos of change in surface features through the 7th millennium.

together diverse, rare materials and potentially numerous human participants in dramatic moments of reshaping.

An alternative way of understanding the near-absence of mid-occupation, major transitions in the later 7th millennium houses arises if we consider construction and closure, not as the 'frames' of houses' biographies but as particularly major transitions in their own right. Every house's establishment and demolition must have marked a significant change in the way communities lived and worked with material space. There are thus plenty of major transitions in the later 7th millennium houses—perhaps even more so than in earlier, longer-lived buildings. The difference between the early-mid 7th millennium and the late 7th millennium may not be so much about the *rate* of major transitions in communities, but the degree to which major shifts in relationships occasioned demolition and rebuilding as opposed to the overhaul of existing structures. In the later 7th millennium, when communities came to major turning points, buildings were often built or demolished rather than being refurnished and rearticulated with changing human lives. This falls in line with the shift in history-making practices discussed in the last section: the long-lived and socially flexible spaces of previous centuries gave way to an architecture more tightly linked to specific short-term human circumstances. This is especially the case in those partially-excavated, one-off constructions that appear and disappear in the space around the Building 65-56-44 sequence. Although it is impossible without further analysis to suggest how many of these buildings saw major overhauls during their occupation, their construction and closure mark substantial social discontinuities, radically changing the layout of the neighbourhood and the varieties of spaces available for later 7th millennium life.

6.5.2 Changing metabolisms, changing communities

The historical shifts in buildings' social roles come more clearly to the fore when we consider houses' metabolisms: the way they drew in materials and practice, transformed them and 'excreted' cooked food, ash, waste, and the like. Tracing the insistence of ovens, hearths, bins, basins, and quern installations through houses' biographies here can key us into the way vital daily practices shaped communities' dynamics. Further turning points in the site's history emerge, and their metabolic aspect helps to clarify the way changes were driven from the bottom up.

Figure 6.28 traces the number of hearths and ovens through the relative timelines in this thesis. A quick glance at this figure is enough to begin appreciating the historical shifts in metabolic practice through the 7th millennium. Passing from left to right, the shapes of the

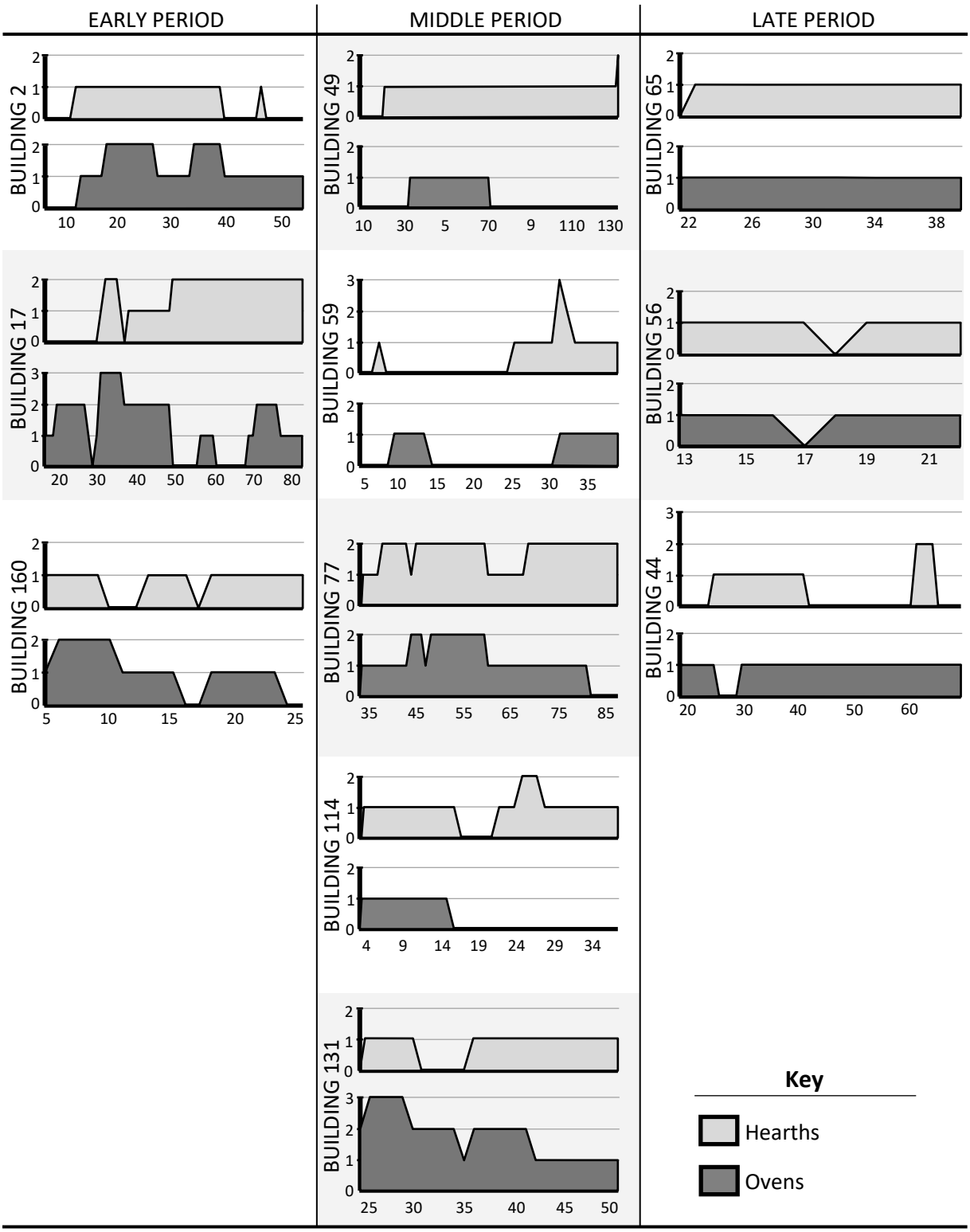


Figure 6.28. Shifting assemblages of hearths and ovens through houses' biographies.

graphs differ at each step, with further variety evident vertically within each column. Exploring these shapes further reveals a great deal about the way communities were stitched together through space-making over time.

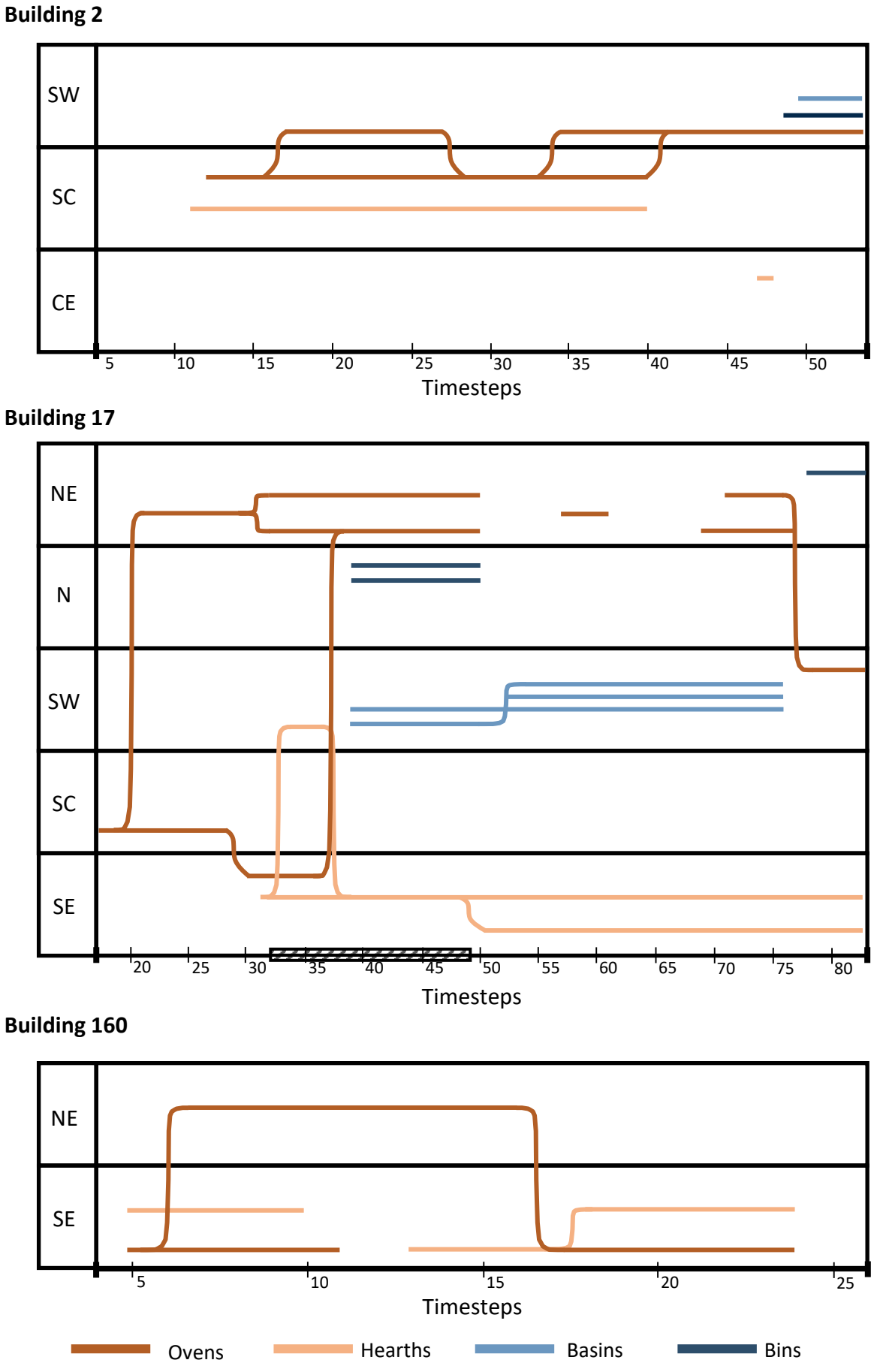


Figure 6.29. Shifting spatiality of metabolic features in early 7th millennium houses.

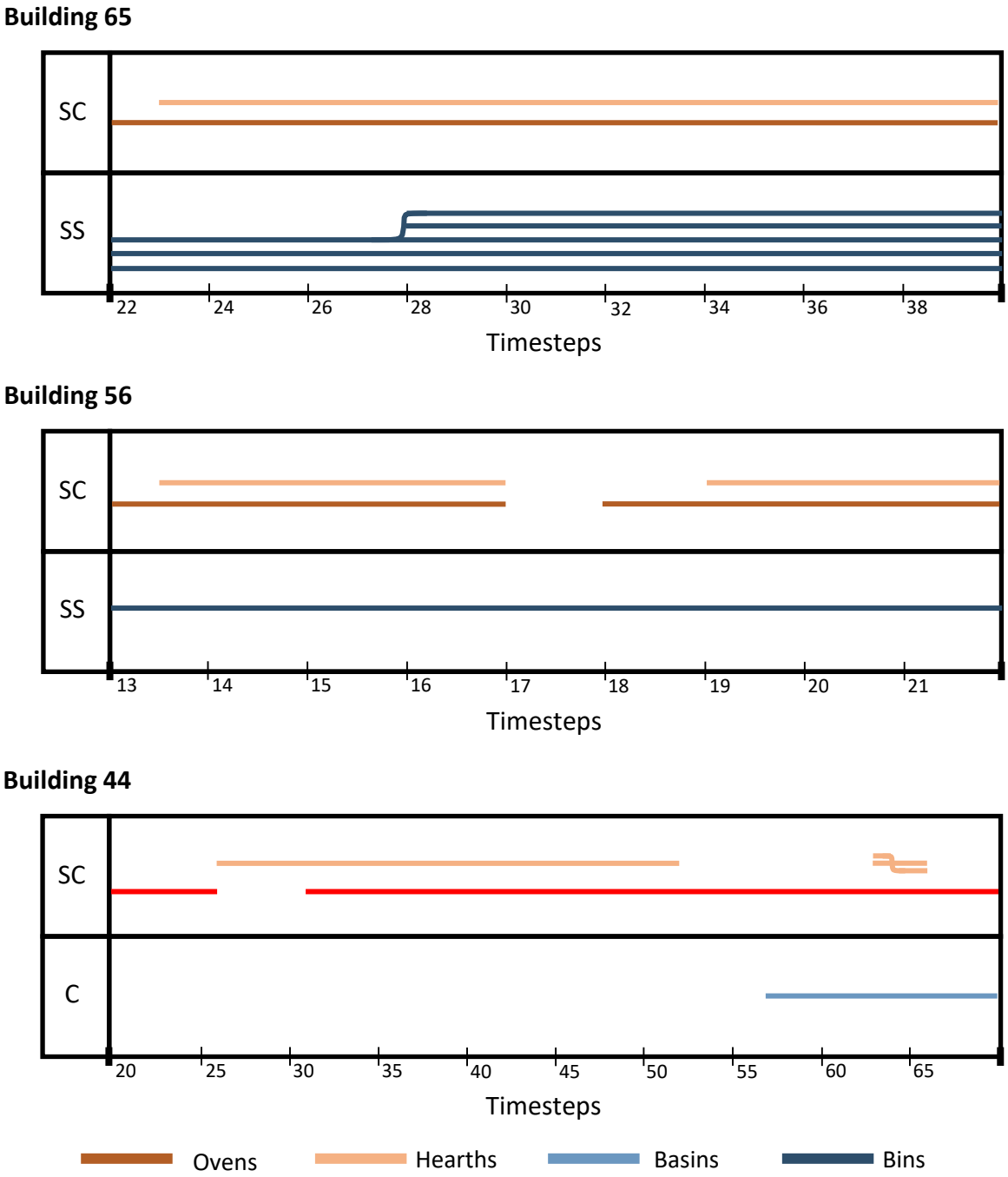


Figure 6.30. Shifting spatiality of metabolic features in later 7th millennium houses.

In the early-7th millennium, the number and arrangement of hearths and ovens in any given building varied dramatically through time. Each building had at least one span where it is likely that multiple ovens were in use, and in all but Building 18 these are set in different parts of the main room. Each also had periods where only one kitchen was in use, and in Building 2 and perhaps Building 17, occupation activities carried on through spans without any associated fire installation. Including the spatial relations of features in the picture only intensifies the sense of variability (Figures 6.29 and 6.30). All three buildings saw cooking and heating, food-stores and supporting features in shifting articulations through time.

Practices had clear spatial centres at some points in their lives, and other times they shifted to far ends of the house, split into redundant areas, or recombined. In the vital daily activities that kept people warm and fed and linked them together through sharing, houses sometimes depended on neighbouring structures' facilities, while at other time redundant cooking facilities suggest division of the practice between different practitioners or different occasions even within one space (cf. §4.5.3).

The 66th century houses that I explored in Chapter 5 (§5.4.2; §5.4.3) thus reveal a dynamic that had shifted substantially from preceding years. Only one building of the five (Building 131) had clearly redundant kitchen facilities; another (Building 77) had two ovens side-by-side. By contrast, several buildings saw periods where they lack fire installations altogether, and four of the five lacked ovens throughout extended parts of their use-lives. As I discussed in the previous chapter, this biographical tendency suggests shifting interdependencies between houses: buildings continued to be occupied and maintained by people who ate food from hearths and ovens elsewhere. Spatially, however, mid-7th millennium buildings appear more regimented than their forebears: only in Building 131 is there considerable rearrangement of the spatial arrangement of features *when present*.

Later 7th millennium fire installations settle into a more stable pattern. The houses here had one hearth and one oven throughout their use-lives. Only hearth-less periods at the beginning and end of Building 44's use-life and a brief proliferation of short-lived firespots suggests variation in cooking arrangements, and even that does not suggest total dependency on other spaces for vital facilities. The outdoor spaces just north and south of the Building 65-56-44 sequence contain a number of small hearths/firespots, and it is likely that cooking and other fire-related activities extended out into the 'yard' just beyond these building (Regan and Taylor 2013). The opening and closing of various crawlholes suggests some degree of dynamics in the buildings' connection to the outdoor spaces around, but there is too little stratigraphic information to assess this in much detail.

Storage and processing features appear comparatively ephemeral in the early buildings (Figure 6.31). It may be that people at this time made greater use of portable querns and organic containers; if so, such equipment would have allowed flexibility in storage and processing arrangements, but of a sort unamenable to stratigraphic study. All four houses have substantial side spaces, although Building 160's may have been blocked off and reconnected to a northern neighbour later in its use life. The bin area evident atop the demolition fill of Building 17 might also be a short-lived side space temporarily attached to Building 160. Although there is clear variability in storage and processing over early buildings' use lives, then, it is difficult to characterize with these data, other than to note that

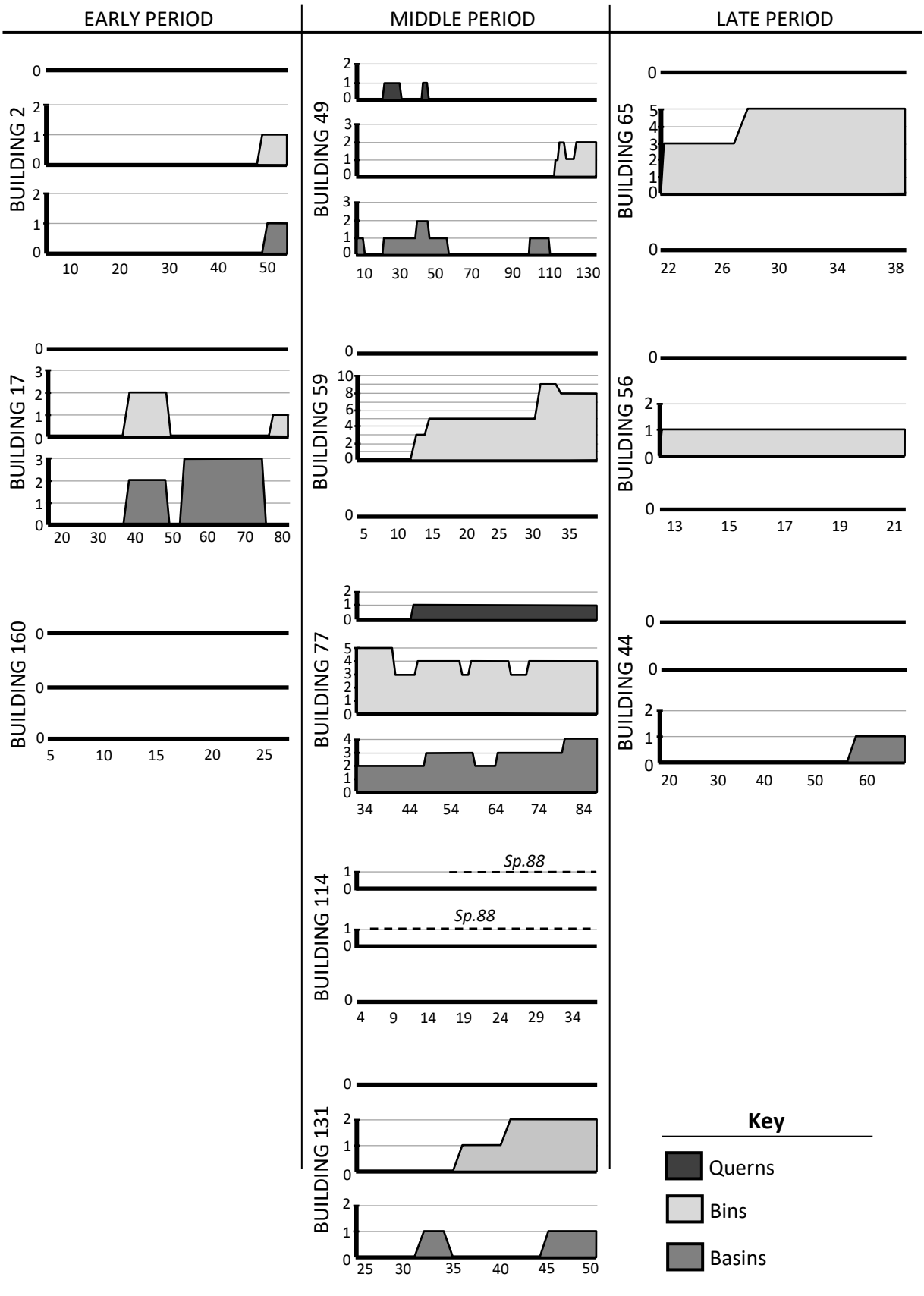


Figure 6.31. Shifting assemblages of querns, bins and basins through houses' biographies.

commitments to carrying out these practices in specific, stationary locations—groups of bins or moulded basins—were frequently short-lived. By contrast, in the middle period there were split tempos of change attached to these features: some buildings, like Building 77 and Building 59, contained long-lived assemblages of bins and/or basins, while others contain storage and processing features (and side spaces) that are more modest and transient.

Of the later 7th millennium buildings, Buildings 65 and 56 have largely stable assemblages of bins, and side spaces that last their entire lives. Notably the latter building contained fewer bins than its predecessor. Building 44 contains no bins, a sole basin, and has no known side spaces. It may have had a side space that has since eroded off the mound. However, elsewhere on the mound this period is characterized by the appearance of small free-standing structures containing little by way of furnishing, which have been suggested to be spaces for storage and/or food processing (Yeomans 2013b). It is possible that the decreasing evidence of storage activities in the Building 65-56-44 sequence relates to the off-boarding of tasks into outbuildings, a dramatic shift from the all-purpose domestic spaces of earlier centuries. Whatever the case, it is clear that features committing storage or processing activities to a particular place were shifted about firstly during houses' (re-)construction, with few shifts in the assemblage of such features in mid-occupation between the three buildings here.

6.5.3 Standardization

In Chapter 5, I argued that the many commonalities in the layout of 66th century houses supported, not a 'modular' social structure where each house housed a discrete household and each household was similar to the next, but a radically interdependent social geography where each person moved through and worked in many houses in the course of day-to-day life. Far from walling people off from one another, similarly-designed houses would have been easier to navigate for people with differing degrees of familiarity with the space, and would have been easier to coordinate among shifting sets of tasks running in tandem. Having a regular way of moving through and arranging space may have been essential for a highly recombinational social structure and taskscape.

By tracing the emergence of these traits over time, we can see houses gradually become more standardized as the settlement grew larger, denser, and as dependencies and interrelations among houses become more complex (Table 6.1). Early 7th millennium houses shared the same broad habitus that stretched back at least to the 9th millennium, with space divided into a number of segments marked out by surface treatment (i.e. 'clean' white or 'dirty' dark plasters) and changes of elevation. There are further clear tendencies in the way specific features and activities were situated in space: burial tends, in these buildings, to occur in

Period	Building	'Kitchen' next to entry	Entry in southeast	Multiple 'kitchen' areas?	Bench betw. entry and 'clean' space	Platforms along wall opposite entry	Burials in platforms	'High' platform in corner	**Percent conforming**
Early	**18**	Possible	Possible	Yes	'Pedestal'	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Early	**2**	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	N/A	No	
Early	**17**	Possible	Possible	Yes	No	No	No	No	
Early	**160**	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Most not	No	36%
Middle	**1**	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Middle	**3**	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Middle	**49**	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Middle	**52**	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Middle	**59**	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	
Middle	**77**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Middle	**114**	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Middle	**131**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	82%
Late	**65**	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
Late	**56**	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes*	Yes	No	
Late	**44**	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes*	Yes	No	
Late	**47**	No	Possible	No	No	No	N/A	No	54%

Table 6.1. Changing standardization of space through buildings' biographies. Shaded cells conform to the mid-7th millennium 'standard'.

broad, flat, white-plastered and sometimes central areas (e.g. Buildings 17 and 160), and rarely occurs in the immediate vicinity of cooking and processing features; bins and basins cluster together, when they occur; hearth and oven areas are usually marked off with kerbs or platform edges from other areas of the house. But beyond these general guidelines (and there are exceptions to most of them), the exact way in which space was organized varied considerably from house to house.

There is thus a steady increase in the degree to which buildings conformed to regular spatial patterns over the first five or six centuries of the site's occupation. This may indeed be the process we see at work through the biographies of 66th century buildings, which tended to become more adherent to the 'standard' layout over the course of their use-lives (§5.4). Although there were always idiosyncrasies in each building's layout, especially when it came to the actual assemblages of features that supported activities within them, by the middle of the 7th millennium there was a range of broadly-shared organizational premises that anyone could expect to find upon entering a building, facilitating the kinds of shifting social networks that involved people and houses in one another's lives at the time.

Later 7th millennium houses were varied in the degree to which this standardization continued. Certainly much of the spatial habitus of earlier centuries continued. The Building

Figure 6.32. Changing space in the late 7th millennium. Interior of Building 47, showing trench-like hearth and single low platform in small single-room structure. Facing northwest. Used with permission (Çatalhöyük Research Project).

65-56-44 sequence remains broadly faithful to the kinds of spatial regularities that characterized mid-7th millennium houses (although the existence of temporary portals in different parts of their main rooms may indicate very different pathways of movement into these houses and out into surrounding yards). Insofar as their limited preservation and excavation reveals, however, the one-off structures that appear and disappear around the 65-56-44 'spine' may have had more varied, and likely simpler layouts (Regan and Taylor 2013). Certainly Building 47, the only fully excavated late 7th millennium house in the North Area has a very different layout, with a single large platform next to a central trough-like hearth and narrow C-shaped low area along the north, east and south walls (Figure 6.32). The overall impression is that each house's spatiality was able to diverge more dramatically from neighbouring buildings, suggestive of a more intimate connection to specific on-the-ground circumstances and less need to make interiors predictable and finely-segmented.

6.5.4 Building by living in the 7th millennium: discussion

Throughout the sequence at Çatalhöyük, we learn about the political tenor of Çatalhöyük communities, not only through what a house *did*, but by the way its roles *changed*: the shape of each house's biography. The three analyses above help us to characterize the transformative process of community as it shaped the centuries at hand. This section draws the

evidence together in narrative form. Using the device of *material political dimensions* (§4.5), I show how the contingencies of living and working together changed, and the ways communities actively contributed to that trajectory. Different dimensions of material politics waxed and waned through time, playing a greater or lesser role in shaping lives and houses. In particular, I argue that:

The early 7th millennium saw communities explore the social potential of *friction*. Within such a context, individual houses' roles, capacities and layout could vary dramatically through their lives, and they frequently appear to have had redundant facilities as partial, non-binding social distinctions were worked through. The same social differences that led to redundancy/division within houses also drove the 'budding off' of new structures near to existing ones, and the steady densification of the built environment.

As more buildings were added to the site and as human lives increasingly spanned multiple structures, mid-7th millennium communities pushed the potential of *creative dependency* to its maximum, crafting spaces that resisted self-sufficiency (§5.5).

Later 7th millennium houses, by contrast, had a social *integrity* that earlier houses lacked: with few exceptions, houses were set up to act in a core set of roles and did not gain or lose capacities through time. Although some practices (construction, plastering) continued to invite collaboration in larger groups, it is likely that these networks too became smaller and perhaps more bounded in the late 7th millennium.

The early 7th millennium houses in the sample here were characterized by rapid oscillation between social roles, especially as these were defined by metabolic features and by their layouts. Not only did each house go through major transitions in their furnishing—often, several per biography—but the implications of those changes could be especially substantial. Taking a building with two kitchens and reducing it to one (as in Buildings 2, 17, and 160) or conversely taking a building with a single kitchen and dividing it into two or possibly three (e.g. Building 17) could have changed the tenor of daily life in a house dramatically. We cannot be certain that houses with multiple kitchen areas saw those features used simultaneously by different sets of inhabitants; they could also have been used for different sets of fire-related tasks or used under different circumstances (e.g. a 'summer' and 'winter' kitchen or similar). But the sheer prevalence of buildings with multiple-kitchen phases; the fact that some of those same buildings saw spans of time with no apparent fire installations at all (Building 2 and possibly 17); and the way storage and processing features appear and disappear, separate into different parts of the room (Building 17), or whole side spaces

appear to be added on, closed off or swapped between buildings (Building 160) all strongly suggest a complex politics of foodways and other metabolic tasks.

Working with space in this way created or accentuated *friction* within communities (see definition at §4.5). Houses were not participants in single communities acting in economic lockstep. Instead, they drew people together in different ways and at the same time effected partial, situational divisions between them. Just as low ridges, platforms, and differences in plastering served to slow down movement and suggest divisions that could be adhered to in some situations and ignored in others, houses with multiple kitchens, or with bins on one end of the space and basins on the other, also served to suggest 'passable' social differences between people based on the specific ways they engaged with the same space. We can only speculate what such differences may have looked like in ethnographic terms: relationships between cohabitating adults, e.g. siblings or 'practical kin'? The incorporation of isolated elderly people into younger groups, while requiring them to prepare food separately? Polygynous or polyandrous partnering? But in spatial terms, it is clear that early 7th millennium communities were steadily involved in producing, renegotiating and sometimes reducing friction within living space, always partial and tied to specific kinds of practice.

We can tentatively link the biographical dynamics of friction in early 7th millennium houses and the broader dynamics of the tell's growth. Notably, early 7th millennium houses were not statically partitioned into different parts—the number of fire installations, storage and processing facilities they had changed and the way these were laid out in space shifted regularly. Divisions between people that were previously asserted or generated through a house seem to vanish from the space a short time later. It is not difficult to imagine a social structure in a growing town that steadily generated salient, partial difference between people: divisions that could be managed within an existing architectural frame by multiplying the areas for key practices, or that could be managed by building a new structure nearby. In other words, budding off new spaces may not have created new, discrete social 'units'; it may have worked, in the short term at least, as a particularly strong form of social and spatial friction, taking differences that could be managed within one house and spreading them across multiple structures instead. Such a way of working through change with space-making would generate precisely the kinds of waxing-and-waning furnishing we see in every early 7th millennium house in the sample here. It also resonates with evidence that newly-built houses were kept close to old ones, leading to the filling-in of open space in the site, and with the fact that new houses were often carefully aligned with old ones to produce 'radial lines' of structures (§2.4.3). Above, I argued that spatial histories were remembered within communities that extended beyond any one house, so that highly specific memories of a location could be activated even after discontinuity or a lapse in occupation of that place

(§6.4.1). If we imagine the growth of Çatalhöyük's built environment as an outgrowth of the political friction within houses at the time—as a way of partially, *but passably*, effecting difference between lives, moments and places—then the existence of such communities cross-cutting different houses and acting to shape multiple spaces is unsurprising.

By the site's peak people at Çatalhöyük pushed the political potential of *creative dependency* to its maximum, crafting spaces that were deliberately ill-equipped for the full range of human needs so that lives had to depend on many structures (and many other people). I explored this in depth in Chapter 5 (§5.5) and review the key points only briefly here. Mid-7th millennium houses with multiple kitchens were rare, while most buildings passed through phases with no kitchen, or with just one hearth. Food storage was perhaps increasingly centralized, with structures like Buildings 59 and 77 holding outsized capacity and others like Buildings 3 and 49 (in their later years) having little to no space for keeping staple goods. Massive querns emplaced in structures like Buildings 77 and 114 also suggest that some structures were of outsized importance to the processing of food (cf. Wright 2014). As people needed to pass into and make use of multiple spaces, those spaces reached a high degree of standardization, with many common organizational principles shared across functionally-different houses. The data in this thesis neither clearly define nor rule out any particular kind of maximal institution within which multiple houses could have formed a conceptual 'whole', but a biographical view clarifies that structures were never fixed centres in larger groupings, as some archaeologists have suggested (e.g. Kuijt 2018). In practice, houses played roles in a variety of groups and were constantly subjected to complex, multilateral negotiations.

As people negotiated places and relationships in a radically interconnected world, they opened up possibilities for a very different future. This comes through most clearly in exploring history-making and the politics of depths and surfaces after 6500 BCE or so (§6.4). The transition in terms of daily life and space-making is more abrupt: the later 7th millennium buildings here look very different in terms of the way their furnishings changed and the tempos at which they were renegotiated. Simply put, the biographies of Buildings 65, 56 and 44 are much more stable and straightforward than any of their predecessors. Each house contained a hearth and an oven through most or all of its life, both collected into a compact kitchen area. Few changes were made to the buildings' layouts, and when they were change was likely piecemeal, gradual, and subtle. Only a major depositional event sealing off a platform in Building 56, plus a fast tempo of closure and rebuilding, punctuated this stability. Although the Building 65-56-44 sequence is not necessarily representative of the broader late 7th millennium, what limited information is available from other structures from the period suggests that, although they were laid out in a great variety of ways and followed

no standardized organization, all may have been comparatively stable in terms of the social roles that they played (House 2013c; Regan and Taylor 2013).

All of this suggests that in the later 7th millennium, domestic communities had an *integrity* that they lacked in earlier years. This integrity cut two ways. It meant that every structure had a baseline capacity to support daily and ritual life, unlike earlier interdependent structures. But it may also have meant that the communities that occupied structures had to more or less fit a certain mould, rather than freely recombining and rearticulating lives and space through time. This fits well with evidence suggesting that collaborative task-groups became smaller in the later centuries at the site (Marciniak et al. 2015b) and that houses were more prone to early abandonment as the communities they were tied to dissolved (Marciniak et al. 2015a). This is not to say that collaboration never extended beyond a household-like group of people, or that such groups did not vary meaningfully. In practices as diverse as construction (which substituted more massive foundations and other labour-intensive supports for the stabilizing effect of buried walls) and the aggregation of material for special deposits (which are somewhat larger, more varied and more elaborate in these buildings, often containing dozens of artefacts and rare items), space-making in later 7th millennium houses did rely on collaborative efforts that likely implicated extended social networks (cf. §6.4). Words like 'autonomy' and 'self-sufficiency' still fall short of our evidence for how people reworked space at this time. But day-to-day interactions may well have been relieved of some complicated multilateral dependencies that characterized earlier periods. Moments when many people mustered an effort together would have stood out as increasingly special in their lived experience.

Taken together, these observations help us to build a richer picture of social change as it was generated by the very process of community life in the 7th millennium. The growth of the tell was not somehow external to the work of growing and preparing food, finding shelter, burying the dead or investing in the stability of a structure. Nor was Çatalhöyük's history simply about slotting activities variably in categories of 'public' or 'private', 'corporate' or 'household' practice. Rather, Çatalhöyük took shape as people activated their knowledge of the subsurface to guide creative practice, located key features in houses, divided up a collectively-reaped harvest or embedded reminders of shared feasts and past lives in floors and walls. The contingencies of action changed through time and so the future that communities helped to build turned one way, then another. Nowhere does this become more evident than in the shapes of buildings' biographies in different centuries, as revealed by detailed stratigraphic analysis. By thinking about houses, not as stable entities but material political points of convergence, we start to recognize both the radical interconnectedness and

complexity of 7th millennium lives, and the momentous changes that small actions in small places could produce.

6.6 Spilling out: space-making beyond Çatalhöyük

Çatalhöyük was not built in a snowglobe. As my focus has been to show the fundamentally political nature of intimate spaces, it has been important to dwell on the local and fine-grained through the past three chapters. Fully situating the dynamics that I have discussed within the larger 7th millennium world is beyond the scope of this thesis; others (Brami 2017; Düring 2006; 2011) have taken up the challenge in greater depth than I could hope to here. However, the present study is not of strictly small-scale, localized relevance. The temporalities and materialities of community that shaped Çatalhöyük houses also engaged the site with its wider world. The material politics of houses set people, practices and objects in motion or rooted them in place, not just in neighbourhoods but landscapes and regions.

In Chapter 2, I located Çatalhöyük at a major turning point in the dynamics of the Neolithic. For 2,000 years, a range of practices, understandings and social forms developed in various locations around the Middle East and gradually assembled an integrated, settled agrarian way of life. Although people beyond the Neolithic's core zone also occasionally engaged in some early Neolithic practices (sedentism, harvesting wild cereals, house-oriented ritual performance), and despite steady contact between 'Mesolithic' and 'Neolithic' areas, neither in central Asia nor in western Turkey and the Aegean did settled farming life become the norm during the 9th or 8th millennia. Thus, at its first occupation around 7100 BCE, Çatalhöyük sat near the interface of two regions with very different material political trajectories. A few fully-agricultural sites to the west of Çatalhöyük may date to the second half of the 8th millennium (Baird 2019); and from 6700 BCE onward there was a flux of agrarian settlement in the circum-Aegean area (Brami 2015; 2017; 2019; Horejs et al. 2015; Reingruber 2011). At the same time there was substantial reconfiguration of settlement patterns in central Anatolia, with long-standing sites abandoned and new, more diverse and smaller settlements springing up in many areas (Baird 2005; Düring 2011; 2013; Marciniak 2019; Marciniak & Czerniak 2007). As I argued in Chapter 2, something changed in the way settled life related people to places or set them in motion during the time that Çatalhöyük was occupied. Having explored the material politics of houses within the site, what can we learn about the 7th millennium's regional politics and Çatalhöyük's place in them?

I make the case in this section that the material politics of houses at Çatalhöyük lends critical insight into two dynamics of 7th millennium life: (1) the way specific politics tended to

uproot, dislocate or demand movement of people, and (2) the way specific politics tended to develop meaningful spaces and attach people to them. Çatalhöyük offers just one vantage point, and the view would be greatly enriched by comparable studies of material politics from a variety of contemporary settlements (e.g. steps in that direction in Baird et al 2011; Brami 2017; Çilingiroğlu 2019; Derin 2005; Düring 2006; 2011; Kotsakis 2019; Marciniak 2019; Özbal and Gerritsen 2019) as well as extended empirical work in areas where the archaeological picture remains cursory. The fuller picture only really emerges when one can conceive of the kaleidoscope of vantages that 7th millennium people inhabited; Çatalhöyük never tells the whole story, and at some moments it appears to be somewhat atypical in its time. Nevertheless, as I will show, carefully attending to the dimensions of material politics at this one site at the Neolithic's turning point can aid in developing a richer, multi-scalar and historically-contingent account of the 7th millennium's dramatic dynamics.

6.6.1 New life in deep-rooted places

Çatalhöyük grew in a context of low-level regional mobility, both internally in the Çarşamba wetlands and beyond. During the 8th millennium, people in this area lived in small, scattered villages like Boncuklu. These sites were likely socially intertwined by individual mobility and perhaps occasional cooperation in labour or ritual (Baird 2005). They seem to vanish in the late 8th millennium as population nucleated at Çatalhöyük. Baird (2019, 80) suggests that the same reconfiguration of regional settled landscapes may have set other central Anatolian people in westward motion, leading to the earliest settlements in the Lakes District of inland western Anatolia at Suberde and possibly Hacılar and Bademağacı (but see debate over these sites' dating: Düring 2011, 161-2 and Baird 2019, 77).

When our architectural picture of Çatalhöyük picks up about 200 years later, it is characterized by two political dynamics: the use of *friction* to differentiate people and places without strictly dividing them, and a thriving activation of space's *depth*. These combined to create an historically-specific way of dislocating and relocating people: one that tended to assimilate new needs within or near to existing architecture. Some of the earliest houses for which we have evidence at Çatalhöyük appear to be freestanding. As people moved to the site, some may not initially have sought out intensely close living arrangements with other people at the site. However, as the site continued to grow, as more people and more communities needed space, new buildings were not usually added on at a distance, as if new autonomous social/spatial 'units' were being created. Rather, they were built adjacent to—and sometimes encroaching upon—existing buildings. And often, increased and divergent spatial needs were accommodated within existing architecture: all of the early 7th millennium houses at Çatalhöyük examined here have periods with multiple kitchens, and some have

multiple, shifting storage or processing areas, burial areas, and similar. While this politics did dislocate people, then, that dislocation was often partial and situational. It is not hard to imagine, for example, a group of people building a new house 'next door' to give an upcoming generation of young adults a place to sleep—but instead of furnishing that house with a kitchen, building a second oven area in an older house so younger and older adults could continue collaborating in cooking tasks.

Meanwhile, the activation of depths meant that when new socially-salient places needed to be created, they were situated on top of already-meaningful matter. This is most classically evident in building superimposition, but shows especially strongly in situations where superimposition didn't happen 'tidily'. Sometimes, as social life steadily generated movement and dislocated people, a building would fall out of use or be demolished and repurposed—only to have a new structure built atop it a few months or years later (§6.4.1). Where buildings were created on previously unbuilt space, there were often extended preparatory periods where e.g. burials (Building 17, and later Building 77) or special deposits (Buildings 23, 17, 2 in the early 7th millennium) were embedded in place before construction began. While claims that a politics of superimposition *precluded* migration or long-range movement of people (Brami 2017, 113) are clearly somewhat overstated, the politics of space at Çatalhöyük did *tend toward compactness* as it dislocated and relocated people.

Looking beyond Çatalhöyük, although we cannot say that the politics of dwellings in contemporary sites was precisely the same, there are clear points of resonance with this model of dislocating and emplacing human lives (see also Hodder 2018). It is likely no coincidence that many of the earliest new settlements from ca. 7000 BCE, both in central Anatolia and to the west, were located at places with long social histories, often near to conspicuous landmarks. Girmeler in southwest Turkey was reoccupied at this point, an early ceramic Neolithic site set atop the mound of the older forager settlement; the site is also at the mouth of a deep cave and near to large hot springs, both persistent landmarks through to classical times (Takaoğlu et al. 2014). Ulucak on the west coast, which may date to either the 70th or 67th century due to a calibration curve plateau (Horejs 2019), was initially thought to sit in an 'empty landscape' (Horejs et al. 2015, 321), but has since been shown to sit on a bay ringed with Mesolithic sites and important to the circulation of flint and obsidian in the area for centuries (Çilingiroğlu et al. 2020). Çukuriçi, also on the west coast, also appears well-linked to pre-existing maritime networks (Horejs et al. 2015) and has been argued to grow from preceding 'non-massive mobility' of Neolithic people that established meaningful locations and social connections along the Aegean coast prior to the first farming settlements there (Çilingiroğlu 2016, 33). Further east, certainly Can Hasan III, the clustered neighbour-

hood settlement near Karaman occupied contemporaneously with the early centuries at Çatalhöyük, looks architecturally very similar, with radically dense and superimposed buildings.

This was not the spatial culture of people habitually-bound to one place or locked into continuous social 'units' spanning centuries, but it was also not the rapid enclave migration of the central European LBK (e.g. Robb and Miracle 2007) nor the loose-cannon land-grabbing of chronically propertyless colonials (e.g. Coontz 1988)—not the behaviour of people who see the world as 'virgin soil' waiting to be owned and enculturated for the first time, nor of people habitually in the need of a new place to live. There was almost always a run-up to settlement in the late 8th/early 7th millennium: a development of social histories around a place, and also a retention of ties to older places even as people moved to new ones. We see this in the life-histories of Çatalhöyük buildings, and can perhaps glimpse it in the founding conditions of settlements in other parts of the region. In this period, life at Çatalhöyük—though the site was growing to be exceptionally populous and internally complex—was resonant with the landscapes of action faced by other settled farming people in the region. Late 8th/early 7th millennium politics engendered movement of farming people, sometimes even into landscapes that had never seen an integrated farming settlement previously, but this movement likely built upon rather than upended pre-existing social networks.

6.6.2. Depending across horizons

From 6700 onwards, the rate of new agrarian settlements forming in western Turkey and Greece increased (Brami 2015; 2017; Rosenstock 2019). It is unclear whether this reflects greatly increased mobility in the Neolithic's core zone. Some of the new mid-7th millennium sites do appear similar to central Anatolian or even Levantine settlements (e.g. Ulucak, Çukuriçi, Ege Gubre: Düring 2011; Horejs et al. 2015; Marciniak 2019). Others appear in novel forms and represent either mobile groups from as-yet-unknown core zone traditions, or more likely circum-Aegean foragers adopting farming and permanent settlement as part of their own distinctive politics (e.g. many northwest Anatolian and Thessalian sites: Düring 2011, 180-1; Kotsakis 2019). There are, however, some direct and indirect reasons to highlight the 67th to 65th centuries as a period of increased mobility within central Anatolia and other core Neolithic areas. The latest Neolithic dates from Can Hasan III fall in this time (Thissen 2002), suggesting that a substantial population southeast of Çatalhöyük totally reworked their settlement pattern at this time. A curated beam from later levels at Can Hasan I dates to the 66th century, suggesting that other sites in the vicinity were inhabited from the same time (cf. Düring 2011, 139-40). Further east, it is notable that this time-frame sees the

dissolution or reduction of many large 'PPNB' settlements in the Levant—the much-discussed 'Late PPNB Collapse' (Rollefson 1989; Rollefson and Köhler-Rollefson 1993; Simmons 2002) or shift to smaller, less long-lived settlements (Verhoeven 2004).

Indirect evidence for increased mobility of core zone people comes firstly from Çatalhöyük itself. Throughout its occupation, the tell at Çatalhöyük was tied into other spaces and communities around the region. This does not just include the in- and out-fields (Bogaard 2017), near and distant pasture (Fairbairn et al. 2005; Henton 2013; Pearson 2013), woodlands, foraging and hunting grounds worked by the site's residents. The site also relied on external sources for obsidian, marine shells, and other goods not locally available. In the 7th millennium, several kinds of evidence tying Çatalhöyük into distant spaces and potentially other kinds of trans-regional community suggest shifts in these relationships. Obsidian was sourced primarily from East Göllü Dağ in Cappadocia in the earlier 7th millennium, suggesting a long-standing pattern of travel and network of regional relationships. In the mid-7th millennium, however, an increasing amount of obsidian was sourced from Nenezi Dağ in Cappadocia as well as more rarely from other, further sites in eastern Turkey, leading to a dramatic increase in the diversity of the assemblage (Carter et al. 2008; Carter & Milić 2013). People at Çatalhöyük also began to import cooking pots (or plausibly potting clays) made from colluvial fabric only available in volcanic areas (Doherty and Tarkan 2013 190-1). This pottery, much more heat-resilient than locally-sourced wares, allowed new forms of cooking practice and coincides with an increase in the diversity of the site's cuisine (Gonzalez-Carretero 2020). Domestic cattle likely appear at the site for the first time (Pawłowska 2020; Russell et al. 2013), and as they appear quite suddenly it is argued that fully-domesticated animals were initially sourced from other regional populations (Arbuckle and Makarewicz 2009).

All of this evidence points to the interpretation that there were new inhabited places, new practices and probably new people in the world around Çatalhöyük at this time. People at Çatalhöyük built relationships with these other populations, either by themselves visiting obsidian sources, makers of volcanic-fabric pots, and similar, or by receiving visitors from sites near and far. While it is possible that such distance travel was a specialized undertaking of a small part of the population, it is also conceivable that significant numbers of people from Çatalhöyük were obliged to journey to procure such material, and to share the proceeds widely (e.g. Swogger in Fairbairn et al. 2005, 104-6). There were likely many significant converging points for diverse groups in the region, and substantial relationships (e.g. of cooperation, exchange, friendship or enmity, even reproduction) may have emerged around them. Everyday things—pots and scrapers, cuisines and techniques—may have indexed these relationships even at a distance (Carter & Milić 2013, 478). Major shifts in the on-site

assemblages of distant-sourced objects between 6700 and 6500 thus likely attest Çatalhöyük's embeddedness in a quick-changing context.

One particularly interesting aspect is the way material cultural 'proxies' for distant spaces and relationships appear to articulate with architecture at Çatalhöyük at the time. 'Import' items often appear on-site in mixtures in the mid-7th millennium, with individual houses containing obsidian, ceramics, and similar from a variety of sources. In some cases the juxtaposition of diversely-sourced materials appears to have been an explicit virtue, as in a number of building closure deposits where Nenezi Dağ and Göllü Dağ obsidian, worked in a variety of discrete techniques, were assembled and sometimes set side-by-side (Carter and Milić 2013). Although some houses seem to have been specially associated with particular types of material culture, like wood or groundstone (Wright 2014; §4.2), other gestures seem to stress the far-reaching catchments of materials that came together in a particular place or event. I discussed this in relation to the walls of Building 131 in Chapter 4: the material politics of Çatalhöyük at this time seems to have motivated people to make substantive relationships and depend widely on extended communities, what I call a politics of creative dependency. This seems to broadly characterize Çatalhöyük people's engagements with off-site spaces and neighbouring communities, too. Throughout the site's peak centuries, people creatively built extensive, capacious, and multilinear relationships in the way they acquired and circulated certain kinds of material culture. A great deal remains unknown about the way materials and people flowed into Çatalhöyük and circulated around the tell, but what evidence there is appears consonant with the politics of creative dependency that I have argued drove houses' dynamics at this time.

Although people at Çatalhöyük clearly engaged with a more-mobile and shifting regional picture of ca. 6700–6400 BCE, their architecture does not seem geared toward substantial mobility or emigration. Much as in earlier centuries—and in some ways more so—their domestic politics tended to dislocate people only partially, unequipping a house for one or two tasks but maintaining other uses and commitments, or adding one new functional potential to a space while maintaining other clear absences. The politics of depth continued, and may even have been enhanced (at first) by visually elaborating the oldest houses on the tell. It is still possible that Çatalhöyük participated demographically in the mobility of the time, around the margins, as a source for 'emigration' or destination for 'immigration'. Certainly there is room, in the rather fluid approach to community that I suggest these centuries saw, for some people to find themselves marginalized or without space, and to choose instead to move away from Çatalhöyük. But on the whole, the dominant politics of the site seems to have kept people tied into Çatalhöyük even as an increasing number of neighbouring people relocated and refigured the regional settlement pattern (and probably

beyond). Çatalhöyük engaged with mid-7th millennium mobility creatively and actively for generations, extending and reworking an older politics of community without dramatically upsetting older patterns of affiliation and change.

6.6.3 Integral spaces in centrifugal times

By the later 7th millennium it is clear that older Neolithic ways of inhabiting the landscape had waned in favour of more, smaller and more mobility-generating modes of settlement. The number of known settlements in the Konya Plain, the Karaman Plain, Cappadocia and the Lakes District increases substantially after ca. 6400 BCE (Baird 2005; Düring 2011; Thissen 2002). Similarly, circum-Aegean settlements, especially in northern Greece, appear to 'fill out' the landscape several generations after the Initial Neolithic, inhabiting diverse locations with a concomitant increase in architectural variety (e.g. Kloukinas 2018). There is a concomitant decrease in the scale of settlements regionally. The largest of the late 7th millennium central Anatolian sites, like Köşk Höyük in Cappadocia (Öztan 2002) and Can Hasan I near Karaman (French 1998) reached about 4-6 ha. in size, one-third to one-half of Çatalhöyük at its peak. Most sites were even smaller than this. Whereas central Anatolian settlements up to this time yield a fairly constrained range of architectural styles, later 7th millennium sites reveal new kinds of architecture (e.g. drystone or stone-socle construction) as well as a greater diversity of ceramic styles and other material culture (Düring 2011). Some genetic evidence even hints at an influx of people to central Anatolia, with genetic heritage from the foragers of the Caucasus or more recent farmers of the Iranian plateau (Mathieson et al. 2018).

It is at this time that the lives of houses at Çatalhöyük take on an increasing integrity, with each house fulfilling a basic set of daily functional and symbolic needs throughout its use-life. This was paired with a more surface-oriented way of defining places, with old and buried social matter guiding people's plans and projects to a lesser extent. Buildings were, on average, short-lived but stably-furnished for as long as they stood; many were unrelated to earlier architecture and dynamically related to surrounding open spaces with shifting doorways/portals. People surely still collaborated in cross-cutting communities—to build houses, to make use of and maintain outdoor areas, to herd, farm, forest and to source and circulate off-site resources. But, as I discussed above, there is some reason to believe that even these communities were rearranged to be smaller and less entangling at the time (Marciniak 2019; Marciniak et al. 2015b). The integrity of houses suggests further adaptation away from the politics of creative dependency: establishing spaces such that, wherever and with whomever one lived, there was less daily necessity of accessing diverse

houses. This likely gave a certain degree of voluntariness to cooperation in tasks that had (a few generations prior) been much more prone to creating long-term entwinements of lives and spaces. Although it would be stretching the evidence to reconstruct Çatalhöyük as a 'patchwork quilt' at this time—with small patches of densely interwoven lives and materials (i.e. small sets of houses, or even individual houses), and sparser threads of connection to adjacent patches—the implication is that Çatalhöyük tended toward a more quilt-like social structure than in earlier, more expansively interwoven times. In this context, what we may be seeing when clusters of building sequences (or 'one-off' buildings) end is the dislocation of groups of people, perhaps those sharing special collaborative relationships (e.g. practical kin), not just in one domain (e.g. a house being unequipped for major grain processing) but wholesale. Integrity produced more stable spaces in the short-term, yet more potential for abrupt spatial change over the medium term (Marciniak et al. 2015a).

Although the evidence is coarser there is good reason to infer resonant politics of community at contemporaneous sites. Just as at Çatalhöyük, practices may have been organized at smaller scales than the expansive interdependent communities of earlier clustered neighbourhood settlements. For example, at Hacılar in the Lakes District, later-7th millennium construction produced clear clustered neighbourhoods reminiscent of earlier Neolithic settlement plans to the east—except with clusters of about two to six structures rather than dozens (Düring 2011; Mellaart 1970). At Hacılar and other Lakes District sites (e.g. Bademağacı and Höyücek: Düring 2011, 163; Duru 1999), and on the Aegean coast at sites like Ulucak (Derin 2005), a range of construction techniques are evident in single, small sites. Finally, although studies of the social and landscape dynamics of farming and herding are few in later 7th millennium Anatolia (but see Çakırlar 2012; Meiggs, Arbuckle and Öztan 2017), studies at a variety of slightly later sites ranging from early 6th millennium Greece (Halstead 1996) to Upper Mesopotamia (Akkermans and Duistermaat 1996) suggest the emergence of new mediating practices that allowed increased specialization in skills, labour and residency of small groups of people, e.g. groups of seasonally transhumant herders attached to more sedentary farming villages (but see Bennison-Chapman 2019 for a nuanced appraisal of some 'mediating practices'). Although it would be crude to imagine that either small clusters of buildings or differing construction techniques represent discrete social groups, what these phenomena do suggest is a move away from the kinds of site-wide standardizing impulses that facilitated extensive, interdependent and cross-cutting communities in the larger, denser architectural worlds of the early 7th millennium.

The diverse architecture of many later 7th millennium sites in Anatolia also suggest that the temporal changes seen at Çatalhöyük at the same time were part of a widespread phenomenon. The small building clusters at Hacılar incorporate substantial stone and mudbrick

buildings alongside wattle-and-daub structures, as well as light screens marking off outdoor activity areas. These lighter constructions were likely also more ephemeral, and certainly would have required different kinds of commitments in terms of maintenance. Although French (1998, 20) characterizes the late 7th millennium layers at Can Hasan I in the Karaman region in terms of architectural continuity, it is clear in section drawings that his narrow sounding into these layers captured one sequence of superimposed buildings alongside other one-off structures (French 1998, fig.43). The same dynamic is equally evident at Çukuriçi on the Aegean in levels dating to the late 7th millennium (Brami et al. 2016). 'Fragmenting time' (Marciniak et al. 2015a) thus appears to be a widespread phenomenon in later 7th millennium architecture, connected to a more portable approach to the creation of place and identity.

The politics of houses at Çatalhöyük can thus help us to understand the day-to-day adaptation of communities to a late 7th millennium world's unstable geography. The timeline presented here does not support arguments for a causal relationship, where waning politics of depth (Brami 2017) and/or the emergence of less extended, more integral communities (Marciniak et al. 2015b) triggered the increased mobility of the time; from Çatalhöyük's vantage at least, increased regional mobility preceded (and likely encouraged) the development of social techniques like integrity. It is unclear whether Çatalhöyük was late to adopt more integral communities, or whether this change happened simultaneously across the broader region. Nevertheless, even if it was a secondary development, the adaptation of intimate communities across Turkey to a smaller-scale and less-rooted way of making space must have helped to sustain the expansionary dynamics of the Neolithic—one contributor to an emergent dynamic (Robb 2013).

6.6.4 Intimate communities and regional histories: reflection

This short overview only begins to develop a link between the politics of domestic space and the politics of mobility in the 7th millennium. One of the clearest outcomes of the analysis is the realization of diversity in any one region, much less larger scales, at any point in the 7th millennium. The experience of intimate community and politics must have been very different for someone living at Çatalhöyük, where the mid-7th millennium represented broad continuity of generations-long traditions and very specific histories of space, and someone living on the nearby Karaman Plain, in a generation-old settlement on the Aegean coast, or in a foraging community along the Sea of Marmara at the same time. It is only through more thorough study—empirical but also conceptual—of the diversity of lifeways entangled within sites and across horizons at the time that we will truly grasp the pivotal dynamics that

shifted settled farming life from a Middle Eastern idiosyncrasy to a global transformation (Kotsakis 2019). The trends sketched here—a slow and history-informed mobility in the early 7th millennium; an acceleration primarily anchored in the Aegean in the mid-7th millennium, with a shifting social landscape in central Anatolia revolving around more stable sites; and a more widespread adoption of more mobility-prone models of community in the later 7th millennium—represent seeds for expanded research, rather than a case closed.

On the other hand, this section has made it clear that the politics of intimate spaces is not confined to small-scale relevance. The structure that domestic architecture gave to communities at Çatalhöyük—the way it pointed lives toward change—implicated other spaces, places, and possibilities. This included the potential and periodic need for living arrangements to be reworked. It also structured the need to build expansive relationships and knowledge across horizons and with other people in the region. In the way that Çatalhöyük's material politics resonates with, or contrasts with, those of other places, we can begin to assemble a picture of regional dynamics, social tensions and emergent causes for large-scale currents of change. The investigation of the way houses change that I have embarked on in this thesis is thus not confined within the mudbrick walls of its focal site. By defining the material politics of intimate communities at Çatalhöyük, we have learned a great deal about the broader possibility space of life in the 69th, and 66th, and 63rd centuries—and something about the way one time led to another.

6.7 Conclusion

The people we live with and the things that we do in houses so often seem intimate, small and personal. And they are—but they also spill out far beyond four walls. The way we share or divide living space has a great deal to do with the demands we place on land and housing; the ways we move and metabolize matter shapes the ways we spread viruses, emit carbon, deplete forests; whole economies of maintenance, utilities, rent rest on the materiality of our homes; and ecologies of waste, monoculture grass yards, gardens, hedges, and scavengers grow out of our living space. Gender dynamics that will shape future elections have already started in our children's homes. Instincts like possessiveness or solidarity, bigotry or inclusion that dominate our public spheres emanate, to an extent that we rarely grapple with, from the intimate work of living together in bedrooms and grocery stores. It is easy to imagine a future for ourselves where our institutional social structure is different—where the healthcare service is privatized or utilities are nationalized, where local councils are

dissolved or neighbourhood assemblies developed. It is far more challenging to imagine a future where we do not have to grapple with distributed forces that are changing our world, like the degradation of the planet or the disparities of power and personhood generated by private property ownership. The force behind social change often comes from quiet places.

This has always been the case. The way houses and communities take shape are tightly tied together, a material politics that informs and directs the way the world changes at much grander scales. Exploring this material politics is a challenging way to study history, asking much of our ability to work between more and less anthropocentric concepts, between scales of space and time, and in contexts of multiplicity, multivocality and ambiguity. The material political history of Çatalhöyük that I have developed in this chapter is far from seamless. There are many points where specific actors 'with faces' (Tringham 1991) fade out into vaguer 'communities'; where the stakes of asserted tensions remain unspecified and the contexts of action in a vast and intricate world are only sketched in. Yet even this beginning starts to trace a livelier history to a site that has too often fitted ambiguously into received categories and stock narratives. We have begun to understand the combination of long histories and daily needs that motivated the growth of the tell in its early centuries; the insistent interdependencies that stitched a radically-dense mid-7th millennium town into an intricate mesh of lives and materials; and the knowledge and practice that turned lines of that mesh inward to make more integral, portable more-than-human communities in the later 7th millennium. Looking at houses as drivers of historical change, rather than indexes or stand-ins for institutions, has also let us look inward at the specific changes in those houses, to better grasp how lives arrayed around hearths, walls and horned pillars may have fitted into a vibrant world. Only some of the multiple political dynamics that houses played parts in have become clear in this analysis. But the dynamics that *do* jump out of these houses' biographies give us a great deal to explore as we trace the history of this Neolithic tell from the bottom up.

Chapter 7

Building possibilities: political futures and material space

7.1 Interrogating space-making: revisiting the core questions

Over lunch at Çatalhöyük in 2014, Rosemary Joyce said to me: 'I believe that every person, at any place or any time, has at least a few moments in their life where they can radically change the way they live.' That thought has stuck with me since. In many ways, the history of Çatalhöyük as I have written it here is the sum of many thousands of such decisions, taken or deferred, over the course of centuries. People took decisions to rely on others, or to cut ties of reliance that had joined them. They leaned back on the past as they improvised their futures. At the same time it is the story of the material of their houses, the way lives depended on it and responded to it, how ovens, walls, and burials drew people into relationships and commitments or imposed consequences for letting things slide. Relationships worked, and could be reworked, only through more-than-human collaboration. In this way, whatever horizons were open to any person at Çatalhöyük were shaped by the physicality and temporality of the town's built spaces.

The precise personalities, moods and motivations, fears and possibilities that a Neolithic person would have had in mind when building a wall or cooking a meal are not well-defined by mudbricks and ovens we can lay our hands on today. But by investigating the stratified trajectories of change and reiteration that intertwined to produce the houses we excavate, we can begin to sketch in dimensions of political life in a very foreign place and time. I am certain that people at Çatalhöyük never thought in so many words about 'producing friction within communities' or 'navigating a tension between surfaces and depths'. But these terms capture something about the political alternatives, and the means to navigate them, that communities in the 7th millennium had to hand as they shaped their world.

Getting into this nexus of space and action requires us to think and work archaeologically in unfamiliar ways. I laid the foundation for this in Chapters 2 and 3. It has been necessary to work around the 'slippage between architecture and social structure' that casts houses as spatial units representing singular, unitary communities (Weismantel 2014). Çatalhöyük houses were active participants in many communities, and so their traits do not *represent* any one human group in particular. It has also been necessary to develop a new understanding of

politics, not as negotiation between pre-existing social units or institutions (households, history houses, classes, genders, nations) but as something inherent within creative relationships—politics as the process of defining what could be, or will be, through material intervention (Law & Mol 2008; §3.3). In tracing material politics through the centuries at Çatalhöyük, I have worked to avoid an implicit model of history as progress toward, or collapse away from, some benchmark or end-point pinned to our own way of life (Gamble 2007; §2.3.4). The possibility space for Çatalhöyük's more-than-human communities was much richer than tracing the rise and collapse of 'complexity' or 'inequality' through its sequence could ever capture. Çatalhöyük was not a fitful start toward modernity, but the sum outcome of living and charting a future in some ways unlike anything we know today.

This approach to past spaces, coupled with the detailed building biographies that the relative timeline method can produce from Çatalhöyük's stratigraphy, opened up space-making in this thesis. Chapter 4 delved into the political complexity that even a single house took part in. Laying out a biography of Building 131, I highlighted a number of dynamics that simply cannot be captured by assigning it to a single household or other 'mannequin actor' (cf. §3.1). Even in its construction, Building 131 was a part of many lives: people who helped to dig out the eastern wall of the house below it, or whose rooftop living spaces served as thoroughfare for load after load of mudbrick, or who were related (one way or another) to the many recently-dead individuals buried in the structure's foundations. Nor did this multiplicity stop once the house was fitted for the work of quotidian life. Sometimes Building 131 had several redundant ovens suggesting that cooking and other fire-related tasks were carried out by different groups, or else different facilities were used depending on a given day's circumstances. Yet over time this arrangement was narrowed down until only one cooking area remained. Burials showed the opposite pattern. For most of the building's life people were buried in the same platform, each grave reopening the last. But late in the structure's life several new burial pits were created on opposite sides of the main room. Storing food, cooking it, sharing it, burying the dead, curating remains: each of these practices involved different sets of people in the house in a variety of ways, as a range of stakeholders in the space. Moments when such practices transformed mark points where the structure's involvement in communities changed; and human lives and relationships too must have changed, in small or large ways. I argued that we can begin to glimpse four dimensions of material politics at Çatalhöyük in the way this house was reworked through time: a concept of relationships that were *integral* to any space and thus inextricably bound together through the house's material; a tension between sociality anchored in *surface* features and sociality anchored in the embedding of matter in the *subsurface*; the creative deployment of *dependency* and wilful reliance on others; and the use of passable demarcations—*friction*—as a flexible resource for negotiating space.

These dimensions became a recurring resource in following chapters for thinking about Çatalhöyük as a historically-specific place for community life, addressing first research aim of the thesis:

- How did people at Çatalhöyük make and reshape domestic space as a part of the work of making communities and meeting life needs?

Thinking about houses as fundamentally negotiable—and thinking of negotiations in terms of the dimensions of politics that they reveal—opened up the site's social structure in new ways. In Chapter 5 I interrogated a neighbourhood of roughly-contemporary houses dating to the 66th century. Çatalhöyük society in this period has been an object of disproportionate focus and disagreement, as various studies perceive the apogee of ritual-oriented institutions like history houses or corporate neighbourhoods (Düring and Marciniak 2005; Hodder and Pels 2010; Kuijt 2018); nascent inequality or specialization among households (Bogaard et al. 2009; Wright 2014); or simply a 'very, very large . . . egalitarian village' (Hodder 2006, 98). Although many studies acknowledge that houses must have seen shifting occupation, the working assumption has remained that houses can stand in for specific human groups in analysis (but see Stevanović 2012a). But in a biographical view, structures appeared remarkably variable and far from self-contained. By comparing biographies, I showed that on a given day in the 66th century only some buildings were equipped for cooking food, or storing produce, or were sites of ongoing burial or commemorative display. For their full range of human needs, people in the 66th century had to rely on multiple structures; and any structure had a range of human stakeholders involved in negotiating its form. I also traced a tension between buildings as shifting locations for vital practices and buildings as long-term anchors for meanings and histories, showing a biographical tendency for old buildings to display their histories with insistent visual features. Taken together, these analyses revealed a 66th century town caught up in *creative interdependency* between people and between structures, with houses as distinct but flexible nodes in multilateral political negotiations.

Within a short envelope of synchrony, then, I addressed the second research aim of this thesis:

- How did people's particular way of shaping space fit into broader political dynamics in the Neolithic town?

One of the most striking results of examining the tension between surfaces and depths in 66th century houses' biographies was the observations that the politics of houses was not self-

replicating. As lives and spaces were renegotiated it left behind a changed world that formed a different kind of basis for future action. Chapter 6 took up the implications of this and traced space-making as a driver of change through the 7th millennium. I showed how early 7th millennium life generated *friction*, both in houses' physical form and in the human relationships that were bound up with them. Sometimes this friction led to houses with redundant facilities and dramatic reorganizations of space; other times it led to the 'budding off' of new structures that came into being already enmeshed with their predecessors (rather than being strictly partitioned off socially and spatially). This propelled a town that grew larger and denser. At the same time, the definition of houses as nodes in these networks with reference to their *depths* pointed negotiations ever toward the revival of buried forms, leading to centuries-long sequences of rebuilding in place despite significant discontinuities in the roles the houses in question played. An early 7th millennium way of making communities with houses, in other words, generated the very conditions that we recognize in the 66th century. As 66th century houses were defined within networks increasingly through the *surface display*, rather than embedding, of their histories, however, this trajectory toward vertical growth was interrupted. Houses may have become 'uprooted' from the subsurface below them and the result was greater architectural variation and more freely shifting structures in the later 7th millennium (ca. 6500—6300 BCE). Later 7th millennium houses were also apparently less flexible in their social roles. The few fully-excavated houses from this period display a range of *integral* functions, from daily cooking to burial, that do not seem to have been reworked in the way that earlier houses' capacities were. Taken together with studies pointing to smaller working groups (Marciniak et al. 2015b), I suggested that the rich interdependency produced by material politics in earlier periods gave way to a more patchwork society, with smaller groups of people and houses collaborating in a more integrated way but shifting more freely in relationship to others.

Although limited by the smaller sample of houses from the earliest and later centuries, this chapter gave substantial insight into the third research aim of the thesis, showing not just *what* happened but sketching in *how*:

- What changed in the ways communities formed and intersected through houses over the 7th millennium?

Çatalhöyük's residents changed their world with the help of their houses. But their world did not end at the tell's edge, or at the mountains that loom at its horizons. Because of the intricacy of the biographies presented here, I focused on this one site, situated on the verge of settled farming life's pan-Eurasian expansion. But in the final section of Chapter 6 I connected the narrative of space-making and social change at Çatalhöyük with concurrent

transformations in the region. I argued that the shifting material politics of houses was tied to different ways of locating and dislocating people over time, tying action back to persistent places or sending people out to visit, exchange, and settle in places near and far. From the later 8th millennium onward, occasional incidents of mobility (including some that grew the site at Çatalhöyük) built upon long-lived social networks and salient locations. This resonated with the politics of *friction* and *depth* that define early Çatalhöyük. Although some farming settlements appear slightly outside of the core Neolithic zone in the late 8th/early 7th millennium, the vast majority of mobility at this time connected neighbouring people (ignoring anything like a Mesolithic/Neolithic 'frontier') without leading to frequent establishment of new settlements along those networks. Indeed, this approach to mobility to some extent continued to characterize Çatalhöyük even after 6700, when increased mobility *is* evident around central and western Turkey and the Aegean world. The politics of *creative dependency* that stitched extensive, multilateral communities together across the rooftops of Çatalhöyük also encouraged the development of flexible and far-reaching engagements with a shifting central, eastern and western Anatolian social landscape. Only in the later 7th millennium did new history-making techniques and short-lived, stably-furnished houses structure communities around new kinds of dislocation—more intermittent and total, rather than constant and partial—that began to disperse the radically dense settlement at Çatalhöyük and engage its population as major participants in the period's fast rearrangement of Neolithic geographies.

Rather than simply situating Çatalhöyük within its regional context, then, this brief study helped to show how Çatalhöyük communities took part in *producing* and *reshaping* their regional context:

> How did politics 'spill out' of houses at Çatalhöyük and feed larger-scale dynamics in the region and beyond?

The ultimate finding of this thesis is that the politics that drove historical transformation at one of our species' most consequential turning points was anchored much more meaningfully in intimate spaces and communities than our dominant concepts of politics will ever allow us to think. By setting aside questions of just what the dominant institutions at Çatalhöyük were, or how similar to modern dynamics of power and prosperity they came, and turning instead to two little questions—how did people make space as a part of living together, and how did the materiality of that space shape their communities?—a period that has at times devolved into intractable archaeological dissensus has taken on clearer and livelier dynamics.

Of course, I have not overhauled our understanding of 7th millennium Anatolia with this one study. I have built on critical insights from others before me, and a tremendous resource of excavation and documentation; and this study does more to suggest futures than to pin down any pasts once and for all. Before concluding this thesis, I will sketch out a few particular directions this research has opened up, and address a few limitations that were built into the study here that warrant consideration.

7.2 Constructing futures: opened avenues and roads-not-taken

The analysis here points to further research avenues, both at Çatalhöyük and beyond. Eschewing the concept of one unitary household per Çatalhöyük house casts existing evidence from the site in new light. Where the disjuncture between different patterns in the data, with houses simultaneously appearing 'central' or 'peripheral', 'autonomous' or 'interdependent' depending on one's angle, has frustrated conventional analyses looking for a totalizing institutional structure (§2.4.4), we can begin instead to think of how different practices drew together a range of communities and how lives shifted between and reconciled their diverse political entanglements. Further, by recognizing biographical dynamic that were previously overlooked (e.g. 'kitchenless' phases and the transition from depths- to surface-oriented political techniques in houses' 'old age') this thesis has highlighted new social phenomena that future analysis can further elucidate. Equally the growing recognition that Çatalhöyük's politics spilled out into a broader social landscape should stimulate further research on fields, pastures, forests, off-site seasonal encampments, long-distance material movement ('trade') and other practices that politicized off-site space (e.g. Baird et al. 2011; Bogaard 2017; Henton 2013; Marciniak et al. 2015b) and unbuilt space on-site (Issavi in prep.; Portillo et al. 2019; Shillito and Ryan 2013). The results presented here would be stronger for a more thorough situation in context of these other kinds of space-making. Finally, the relative timelines in Appendix A provide an empirical resource for analysing data with reference to time and process: it is easy to imagine further analyses that could be run with reference to the timelines, simply by relating additional information from the site database to the timesteps system. Despite 25 years of focused investigation, Çatalhöyük's politics still hold unexplored dimensions, and the insights gained in this thesis represent only a fragmentary step toward drawing them out.

Ripping up some rooted assumptions about what politics can look like—the expectations established by 'originsland' narratives and representational views of the material world—and injecting a sense of multiplicity, collaboration and possibility should be an ongoing

priority for research on the Neolithic in the Middle East more broadly. Using Çatalhöyük's exceptional record to extrapolate political dynamics for a broader region, as I have done (and others before me: Brami 2017; Düring 2006), gives a window of great clarity on one town at the verge of the 7th millennium's pivotal changes. But equally, it risks inflating this one town's role out of all proportion. Surely the politics of space-making was more diverse, and its long-term history more full of turning points, than I have portrayed it here. What politics really drove the rise of clustered neighbourhood settlements throughout the 9th–7th millennia in Central Anatolia? How did space-making work in the sparser networked milieu of Boncuklu Höyük and its contemporaries? If Çatalhöyük had few dynamics resembling the existence of a 'household', was this a Central Anatolian oddity, or do we need to reappraise the dynamics of space-making in other parts of the Neolithic (e.g. Banning 2011; Fagan 2017)? A number of scholars are already engaged in addressing such questions, and are developing a richer Middle Eastern prehistory in the process; I hope that the findings here can provide further clarity as to what a more historically-specific and multiscalar politics might look like, and methodological tools to think well-preserved sites differently.

In global context Çatalhöyük is an unusual context for a study of domestic life, with its intricate stratigraphy, extensive excavation and the superficial simplicity of an architecture that was almost exclusively 'domestic'. My stratigraphic methods will need adaptation—or a total reworking—to apply to houses elsewhere, especially outside of plastered mudbrick contexts. But the ambitions here hold weight in a range of contexts. For decades, archaeologists have noted the limitations of household-oriented analysis: the difficulty we face in tracing change in households' human membership, the tendency of domestic research to be pigeonholed as a 'gender issue', and the epistemological challenges of translating between houses' material remains and an 'ethnographic' sense of household life (e.g. Hendon 1996; Tringham 1991, 1995; Wiley 1991). My solution has been simple, and we should try it elsewhere: let go of the household as an analytic concept. Not only are households far from universal as a way of arranging relationships with living space (Russell 1993); even in contexts with a clear concept of communities defined by coresidence in a house or compound, this only captures part of the intersecting politics of any house. Rid of the mannequin 'they' of the household (§3.1), this thesis points toward a politics of houses that is more complex and dynamic, with diverse stakeholders and active materiality. Others have begun pioneering similar approaches in architecture ranging from longhouses in Europe (Eriksen 2019) and eastern North America (Creese 2014) to pit houses in the Balkans (Bailey 2018), stone compounds in Mesoamerica (Normark 2009) and 'settler' homes in Canada (Maxwell and Oliver 2017). Considerations that I have only hinted at, like the ontological blurring between structures and social persons (Eriksen 2019; Joyce and Gillespie 2000) and the biographical or vital powers of materials used to make houses

(Boivin 2000; McFadyen 2013; Noble 2017) further add breadth to our resources for revitalizing living space as a force of history. Along the way, methods suited to almost any architectural style and preservation condition have been pioneered. By letting go of the one-to-one, house-to-community assumption in light of all these potential avenues for insight, a richer and more multiple politics of past houses can flourish in the coming decade.

Ultimately this thesis was an exercise in thinking politics more intimately, so that the kinds of places and communities with which we most closely work toward the future can have purchase on the past as well. This is in keeping with a broader turn toward nonrepresentational and new materialist politics in the social sciences (Anderson and Harrison 2010; Holbraad and Pedersen 2017). Life is so much more than our institutional narratives and loyalties, however much our scholarly techniques have been historically tailored to cast states, elites, and the like in central roles. The research presented here was undertaken from 2015 to 2020. It spanned the UK's withdrawal from the European Union, two UK elections, the rise of Donald Trump in America, a failed military coup in Turkey, the capitulation of Daesh, three Universities and Colleges Union strikes, and the hottest years in recorded history. It would be disingenuous for me to argue that politics in the conventional sense of the term is unimportant, given the number of hours lost on this project because I was glued to the news. But there are far more politics in life than the newspapers could ever cover: upheavals in dining arrangements, burials of the dead, squirrels in the attic. All of these involve navigating a multiplicity of stakeholders through material change. Ironically, the working methods in most studies under the explicit moniker of *material* politics involve ethnographic vignettes and stories researched in the newpapers (Hinchliffe 2010; Law and Mol 2008). In the right context archaeologists have much richer information to support a material political approach to history. Mine is a partial exploration of that possibility, but it points toward purchase on some forms of politics that neither we nor our colleagues in other social sciences have ever realized.

7.3 Tearing down and building again

The work of making lives together is so often the work of shaping space. Little interventions set up long futures for the people involved, even people who never set foot in the room in question. Sometimes making space is intimate and highly specific, but as each of us sets about it every day, and as the mudbricks and mildews and squirrels of the world set about it too, it adds up to something bigger.

At Çatalhöyük, houses were collaborators in making the world. Whether through the way they contained dead bodies and re-presented them to future diggers, the way they accumulated feasting trophies, artefact deposits, plaster layers, slumps and repairs, or the framework they gave for human interdependency, houses were involved in almost every facet of 7th millennium life there. But they were also vectors for those lives to spill out, as they became attached or detached to places and entangled with other people and material things (or else pushed out by them). Through all these qualities, the site's houses and the record of their dynamics through time gives us an unsurpassed window into the shaping of the 7th millennium world at a pivotal point in its geography.

At the beginning of this thesis I invited you to think about my own house in similar terms: the way humans, rodents, governments, plywood boards and mildews all intersected and shaped one another's futures through the house, and constituted the house in the process. Of course the world our houses today help to constitute are vastly different from the 7th millennium, and the specific of this thesis hardly give purchase on anything in our own lives. But I promised a sense of possibility, nonetheless. I have tried in these pages to re-centre the question of what could be and where it could come about, from the pages of the papers into the attics and bedrooms and people we can touch. Our worlds are much bigger than our houses, but it is through shaping space, in part, that we connect ourselves into the world and gain some ability to act in it. Who are the stakeholders in our houses? How does the matter that makes up our homes act and refract through these communities, pulling us together and structuring our relationships within one another in the process? And how could all this be different? Mudbrick houses buried 9,000 years ago can hardly begin to answer these questions; but they can show us how vital they are to any world. There is change packed up in quiet little places, as there always has been. How we can shape it—and how it will shape us—is an urgent question for our time.

Note on digital archives accompanying this thesis

The relative timelines that form the primary data basis of the analyses in this thesis have been deposited in the University of Cambridge's *Apollo* repository. They are accessible there as XLSX files, readable with Microsoft Excel or any compatible spreadsheet software. There is an accompanying PDF introduction and description of these files. All of the above is archived as Appendix A.

Likewise, feature-level data interpreted from the relative timelines—describing each feature and noting the timesteps at which is was active on the three 'registers' of formation, insistence and embedding—can be found in an XLSX table in this digital archive. This data table is accompanied by a description of the typology of features used in the thesis, as well as an introductory text in PDF form. All of this is archived as Appendix B.

Due to the size of the timelines (some are impossible to print legibly even at A0 size) and tables, permission has been given by the University for these data to be archived in digital form only. No printed version exists. At time of printing, the *Apollo* repository can be accessed via an online front-end at repository.cam.ac.uk. Should this front-end be defunct in the future, staff at the University Library, Cambridge, should be able to produce the data in exchange for kind words, patience and quite possibly a fee.

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